

The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

NOVEMBER 12, 2020

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD Leverett Hires Two More Police Officers

By GEORGE BRACE

At their meeting Tuesday evening, the Leverett selectboard approved the hiring of two new police officers to fill vacant positions in the town's police department. The hiring will add coverage as Leverett begins providing policing to the town of Wendell under an agreement made last month. The board also set a single rate for property taxes in the next fiscal year, and heard a presentation of ideas to reduce pollution from idling cars.

Steven Gould was hired as Leverett's new full-time police officer, and Angelia Rodrigues was hired as a part-time officer. Both officers received unanimous support from the chief Scott Minckler, the hiring committee, and the selectboard. During the meeting, the board conducted a final interview with Gould over the phone, which included questions from citizens.

Gould is a returning Massachusetts resident, who attended school in western Mass and has a degree in information science. He has also

see **LEVERETT** page A7

Insects Downstream Wait on Dam Relicensing



SLOAN TOMLINSON PHOTO

A female Puritan tiger beetle, which may lay its eggs on the Connecticut River bank.

By SARAH ROBERTSON

TURNERS FALLS – When asked why it matters whether scientists successfully reintroduce Puritan tiger beetles to the sandy shores of the Connecticut River, professor Rodger Gwiazdowski may answer philosophically.

“It’s the humility that there’s a natural world that existed before us, and exists arounds us, and we have a responsibility to allow these

things to persist,” Gwiazdowski told the *Reporter*. “Just because we don’t know what something does, doesn’t mean it’s not important.”

The Puritan tiger beetle, or *Cicindela puritana*, is a federally-protected species found only in the Connecticut River and Chesapeake Bay. For reasons likely having to do with decades of human development along the river, the beetle is nearly extinct.

see **DOWNSTREAM** page A2

11 Pre-Eviction Notices in One Neighborhood

By SARAH ROBERTSON

ORANGE – The Leisure Woods Estates mobile home park in Orange had sent at least 11 eviction notices as of last week, representing one-third of the Notices to Quit served in Franklin County since the state moratorium on evictions ended on October 17.

“A lot of the folks here are elderly and low income, that’s what these parks are for,” said John Walsh, president of the Leisure Woods Tenants Association. “You can’t really evict anybody here except for non-payment of rent.”

Residents at Leisure Woods own their personal domiciles and pay their own utilities, but pay rent to a management company to upkeep public spaces and maintain water, sewer, and heating services. Leisure Woods contains 152 house lots, and is one of five living complexes owned by the New Hampshire company Salem Manufactured Homes.

The Leisure Woods Tenants Association formed in 1997 to ensure the owner was meeting its end of the contracts. However, after moving to the facility in 2007, Walsh says he still saw many things out of com-



REPORTER STAFF PHOTO

On November 2, the Sheriff’s Office was asked to file eleven Notices to Quit at one Orange manufactured home park.

pliance, and eventually took over the vacant role of the Tenants Association president.

“I came here to retire. I didn’t come here to start a new job,” said Walsh, a longtime building superintendent for Harvard University who turned 80 years old this summer. In his time at Leisure Woods, Walsh said

see **NOTICES** page A7

More Electric Vehicles are Hitting the Road



PICK PHOTO

This EV charging station at the Erving Public Library, with a dedicated parking spot, should work by next month.

By SALLY PICK

MONTAGUE – With electric vehicle (EV) sales projected to account for roughly 25% to 30% of all auto sales by 2025, due to significant drops in battery costs and increases in EV range within the next few years, now might be a good time to familiarize yourself with electric cars, incentives, and expanding local charging options.

Recognizing that transportation is our state’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (40%), Massachusetts is promoting EV sales with rebates for new electric vehicles and helping towns fund new charging stations to meet the growing demand. If you can afford a new or used EV, it’s an opportunity to help lower our collective climate impact. Unfortunately, the state does not offer rebates for used EVs, which would make them affordable to more people.

Used, lower-priced EVs have become easier to find and are more available as leases expire and EV owners

see **ELECTRIC** page A6

Latest Cannabis Operation Proposed at Industrial Park

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – Is the small town of Montague, population 8,334 according to an updated census estimate, becoming a mecca for the emerging legal pot industry?

A little over a year ago a company called 253 Pharmacy opened on the edge of the industrial park in buildings formerly owned by a company associated with the Hallmark photography school. Last week a “delivery only” company was awarded a special permit to operate in Millers Falls – no cannabis will

be sold on premises – and will soon begin negotiating a “host community agreement” with town officials.

Now a new cannabis company called Flower Power Growers Inc. seeks to open a cannabis cultivation operation deep in the industrial park, in a heavily wooded lot next to Lightlife, a company that specializes in “meat replacement” products like Smart Dogs.

Some might call this a good fit in more ways than one. One of Flower Power’s directors is Michael Cohen, who founded Lightlife in the

see **CANNABIS** page A5

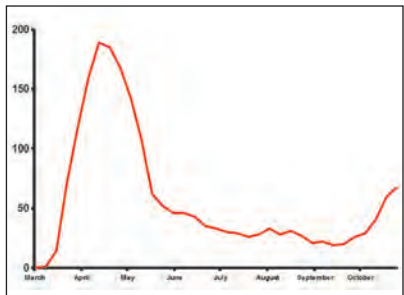
MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Are Local Residents Aware of The State’s New Mask Order?

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard, meeting jointly with the town’s board of health on Monday, confronted the possibility that many Montague residents may not be aware of the governor’s new order to wear masks in public even where “social distancing” is possible. Their deliberation reflected uncertainty about the enforcement mechanisms needed to encourage compliance with the order, the number of COVID-19 cases, and the reasons for the recent spike in “active” cases.

The discussion began with town administrator Steve Ellis reporting on an earlier meeting of the town’s “emergency management team” dealing with COVID policies. This group includes John Zellman, chief of the Turners Falls Fire Department, police chief Chris Williams, health director Daniel Wasiuk, and Ellis. Ellis said the committee discussed changes in state policy, potential enforcement mechanisms, and the new state policy’s impact on town operations.



The number of COVID-19 cases per month is on the rise in Franklin County.

Wasiuk then told the board that eight new positive COVID cases had been confirmed in the town between October 24 and November 9. “That will bring our total case count to 38,” he said. He then reviewed the governor’s order, which requires outdoor mask wearing; advises residents to stay at home between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. except for work and other necessary activities; requires many businesses to close by 9:30 p.m.; and further limits the size of gatherings, particularly at private homes.

As far as “enforcement measures” are concerned, Wasiuk said

see **MONTAGUE** page A8

PERSPECTIVES

Putting Yourself Out There

By SHYANNE CORTIS
with SAVANNA CORTIS

TURNERS FALLS – *Saturday 5 a.m.:* Our alarm goes off. We get out of bed. We gather our gear – food, drinks, chairs, canopy, table, grill, bikes, helmets, clip shoes, jerseys, long pants – and then load everything into the van and head to Rhode Island: Woodland BMX.

The car stops, unloading begins. My sister and I take our bikes out of the back of our Dad’s big white Club Wagon 15-passenger converted school bus van. Savanna’s bike is orange and mine is black, red and

white. We are BMX racers.

We stand in line at the Woodland registration shack; we register, then set up our kit. We double-check the chains and clip pedals on our bikes to make sure they are ready to race.

The track operator posts the “motos” on the motobord, which tells us what time we race. Today, we are both scheduled to race at noon. Savanna is not very excited because it is a “full gate” of eight riders; she is still learning how to balance her bike on the starting gate. I have perfect balance, so I am instead focused on

see **BMX** page A4



CORTIS PHOTO

Racers balance on the starting gate, getting ready.

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Disincentives

Coronavirus cases are spreading faster than ever in this country, led by skyrocketing outbreaks in states like Iowa, Minnesota, and Wyoming.

If anyone is surprised the election was so close, consider recent polling by Pew Research about political concerns. COVID was “very important” to 82% of those leaning Biden and 24% of those leaning Trump. The economy was the biggest concern overall (74%), cited by 84% leaning toward Trump and only 66% leading toward Biden.

Our inadequate safety net has made many fear a “shutdown” more than the virus itself. As Democrats transition into power this is the central paradox they face: figuring out how to *pay* people to stay socially distanced for long enough for the virus to fizzle out. The problem is deeper, and older, than Trumpism.

DOWNSTREAM from pg A1

Due to the Puritan tiger beetle’s protected status, FirstLight Power Resources, the company that operates the hydropower dam at Turners Falls, must submit a biological assessment plan explaining how flows from the dam affect its habitat. Hydroelectric dams must renew their licenses every 30 to 50 years through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and FirstLight is nearing the end of a years-long relicensing process.

On August 25, days before the company was expected to submit its final relicensing application to FERC, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) submitted comments on Firstlight’s proposed plan. The letter cited new information about the Puritan tiger beetle’s hunting and reproduction habits potentially threatened by the dam’s proposed operating schedule. In response, Firstlight requested two to three months to readjust their plan.

“We did know going into relicensing that this was going to be an issue,” said Andrea Donlon, a River Steward with the Connecticut River Conservancy. “I think all the agencies are hoping to get better flows out of Turners Falls so this little beetle isn’t submerged every single day.”

Whether dam operations at

Turners Falls have a negative impact on Puritan tiger beetle populations, scientists cannot yet say for sure. That conclusive answer will have to wait until December, when Dr. Gwiazdowski finishes analyzing data collected this summer and publishes a new report.

“We’re still in hypothesis mode,” he said. “My curiosity is: why is this beetle now so rare when it used to be so widespread, and what do we do about that?”

From June through August adult Puritan tiger beetles emerge from their burrows to hunt, mate, and lay eggs. Larvae will spend up to two years living underground in a vertical burrow, jumping out occasionally to capture unsuspecting prey. Adults generally hunt their prey at night, attacking smaller organisms with swift and powerful jaws.

“They are absolutely vicious when they go after their prey,” Gwiazdowski said.

Despite their imposing mandibles, he said, a bite from a puritan tiger beetle won’t break human skin.

Researchers have found that the beetles prefer to live in sandy clay soil on sloping riverbanks. The relative fragility of these habitats can make the existence of Puritan tiger beetles an indicator of a healthy and biodiverse ecosystem.



The three instars of Puritan beetle larvae.

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NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

Bill Blanchard glazes windows before painting trim on a house at the corner of L and Second streets in Turners Falls on Monday. The former ironworker used to work on skyscrapers and powerhouses in Florida, and says he got used to walking on beams high above the ground.

“The sites that support Puritan tiger beetles seem to be more rich and diverse,” Gwiazdowski said. “We’ve gotten evidence from other species when dams have gone in they so radically alter the flow that those micro-habitats don’t exist, and we lose those species.”

Gwiazdowski received a pilot grant in 2015 and another in 2017 from the USFWS to begin a Puritan tiger beetle reintroduction project. With a team of about 30 fellow academics and students at UMass Amherst he found success planting hundreds of lab-grown Puritan tiger beetle larvae into riverbanks in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

“This unambiguously is the most significant introduction project for this species in over 20 years,” Gwiazdowski said. He has been studying the beetles for about that long with colleagues at the university, where he leads the Puritan Tiger Beetle Recovery Team. His last published paper, which revealed that Puritan tiger beetles can lay eggs and forage at night too, may affect when FERC will allow the power company to release “peak” flows, and what the maximum flow can be.

“What’s fascinating and maddening to me,” he said, “is that there’s food available all along the river, but the Puritan is in very few places.”

The closest known Puritan tiger beetle population to Turners Falls is located miles downstream on a certain riverbank in Hampshire County known as Rainbow Beach. Using a solar-powered telemetric device, Gwiazdowski’s team recorded the water level, temperature, and moisture at the Rainbow site beginning last June and throughout the summer. This data will help determine whether current dam operations impacted this newly established population.

“It’s a fairly important spot... and with the relicensing of the Holyoke dam, it was also a big issue,” Donlon said. “The Holyoke dam operators discovered that they needed to look at the Montague gauge, and respond ahead of time to the peaking upstream.”

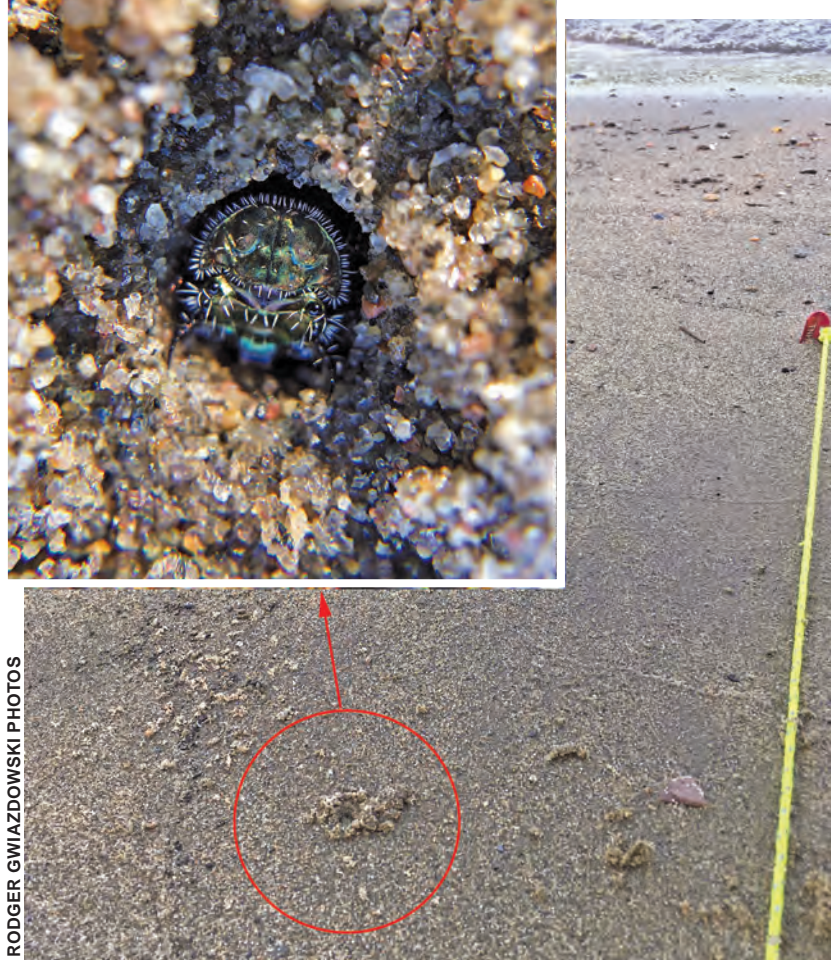
“Peaking” refers to when dam op-

erators release the maximum volume of water allowed by their operating license to generate electricity at opportune times. Due to a hydrologic bottleneck called “the Narrows” between Rainbow Beach and the Holyoke dam, peak releases at Turners Falls may exacerbate flooding at the beetle’s new habitat unless enough water is also released at Holyoke.

“They try to generate at the time when the prices are the most to their advantage financially,” Donlon said of FirstLight. “Holyoke has been reacting to the peaking and trying to do its share for more than a decade at this point.”

“A normal river does fluctuate when it rains, but a river the size of the Connecticut doesn’t go up and down as dramatically, the way a peaking operation does,” Donlon added. “Gradually turning on turbines, or having some that are always on, or having some that go up and down more gradually, would be better.”

In August, seven western Massa-



A third-instar Puritan tiger beetle larva pokes its head out of a sand burrow.

chusetts legislators expressed their support for FERC to impose the “strongest set of operating conditions [and] mitigation obligations” on FirstLight’s new license.

“There is no question of the damage that these facilities have caused over the years, a fact recognized by your staff scientists in their numerous filings to the FERC docket on this proceeding,” read the letter co-signed by Senator Jo Comerford, and state representatives Natalie Blais and Susannah Whipps. “The Connecticut River is also listed in required federal reporting as being in violation of its state water quality standards as a result of these facilities’ operation.”

On September 1, FirstLight requested an extension of its deadline to submit its final application, offering to turn it in “by the end of the year.” FERC responded on October 7, giving the company 60 days to complete its amendments.

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By NINA ROSSI

website at fac.umass.edu.

The First Congregational Church of Montague is hosting a **Holiday Dinner** on Saturday, November 14 from 5 to 6 p.m. It will be take-out only, of course, with pickup in front of the church at the south end of the Montague Center common.

The menu is ham with raisin sauce, scalloped potatoes, honeyed carrots, bread, and apple cranberry crisp. Reserve your portion at \$12 each by calling (413) 367-2652. Proceeds will benefit the Lead By Spirit mission programs; this fundraiser takes the place of the annual holiday fair.

A free, online concert featuring jazz trumpeter and composer **Wynton Marsalis** is scheduled for this Sunday, November 15 at 3 p.m. There will be a live question-and-answer period after the hour-long concert.

Marsalis wrote the material for this premiere, *The Democracy Suite*, during the COVID-19 shutdowns as a response to the struggles facing our country, and the instrumental (featuring seven other soloists in addition to Marsalis) is said to be inspiring and hopeful for a better future to emerge from the collective effort of Americans.

Watch for free by registering through the UMass Fine Arts Center

Americans lose millions of dollars each year to scams. The motives are the same: to steal your money or personal information. Learn about the tricks scammers use and what you can do to protect yourself at a new virtual workshop, November 16, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. through the Mass Hire Franklin Hampshire Career Center: **Scams Alert!**

Register by calling the Greenfield Career Center at (413) 774-4361. You will need to provide an email address to participate.

Greenfield's nonprofit arts education center, Artspace Community Arts Center, will be opening a gallery show next week featuring **local artist Karen Axtell**. The show can be seen by appointment only from November 11 through December 4, or virtually on the Artspace website beginning November 13. Axtell will be showing mixed media works and oil paintings at the Center. To make a viewing appointment, call (413) 772-6811.

Stone Soup Cafe, a **pay-what-you-can weekly meal** at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Greenfield, usually serves about 200 meals every Saturday at mid-day. Meals are cooked on site from scratch, and one of the reasons they

are so popular is that they use fresh local ingredients in dishes that are inspired by cuisines all over the world. They offer vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free dishes, and a variety of proteins are served. Right now, the meals are delivered or boxed to-go for pickup.

Preview the coming menu and order your meal online at www.the-stonesoupcafe.org.

Community Action Family Center sponsors a free event about **Talking with Your Children about Racism** on November 18, at 6 p.m. The webinar will explore ideas about where to start and how to continue talking with kids about this topic. Participants will receive a free Big Y gift card when they register and attend. Sign up online at tinyurl.com/yyc5glfz.

Get ready for the next Northfield Authors & Artists Festival reading group by checking out the work of **scientist Joan Matoof**. She is the founder of the Old Growth Forest Network (www.oldgrowthforest.net) and author of several books: *Teaching the Trees*, *The Living Forest*, *Among the Ancients*, and *Nature's Temples*.

Register now for the Zoom meeting with Matoof, which takes place at 11 a.m. on Sunday, December 6, through the authorsandartistsfestival.wordpress.com website.

Cultural organizations in the state report \$484 million in lost revenue due to the pandemic, according to a **survey by the Mass Cultural Council**. Individual artists report over \$20 million in lost revenue, and more than 30,000 cul-

tural sector jobs have been impacted since March.

If you didn't get enough Halloween during this year's abbreviated celebration, Watch the Lovelights' **"Ghostly Sweetheart Graveyard"** performance, filmed by Montague Community TV on Halloween Eve.

In addition to this production, and a variety of selectboard and committee meetings, you can find an interview with the three principal members of the Mexican food truck Cielito Lindo: Rubilio Galvez, Rogelio Galvez, and Neyda Verudo.

View these videos and more at montaguetv.org.

Enjoy the **Greenfield Farmers Market** until November 21, downtown at Court Square between 10 and 1 p.m. on Saturdays. The market is still looking for a safe, indoor location big enough to satisfy COVID-19 distancing requirements.

Does your child like to draw imaginary creatures? The Brattleboro Museum & Art Center invites children in grades K-6 to dream up, draw, and **submit imaginary creatures** for the 10th anniversary edition of GLASSTASTIC, a beloved celebration of youthful imagination and creativity.

Glass artists will create three-dimensional versions of about two dozen of the submitted drawings for an exhibit that will appear at the museum. Submissions are due by December 8. Guidelines and entry forms can be found at brattleboromuseum.org.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Gov. Baker: Intervene Against Unsafe Farren Transfer!

By JUDI FONSH and PAUL LANZIKOS

MONTAGUE CITY – Action must be taken to suspend the closure of Farren Care Center in Turners Falls, and the displacement of residents at Farren Care Center and Mount Saint Vincent Care Center in Holyoke, until the COVID-19 pandemic subsides.

Currently, these changes are expected to occur by January 1, 2021. There is no expectation that the pandemic will have ended by then, especially in Holyoke which has been, and is presently, an identified “red-flagged” community. Additionally, this is the time of year when influenza spread is high.

Tragically, Massachusetts nursing home residents are at extreme risk during the pandemic, with nearly 6,500 having died to date – one of every six residents, and 65% of all COVID-19 related deaths in the Commonwealth. Infection clusters in facility populations continue to be reported. The infection has rebounded to very high daily rates and hospitalizations throughout the state. More communities are being listed as “red-flagged.”

Even in the best of circumstances, transfers of nursing home residents can be very physically and emotionally traumatic, and potentially lead to premature death. Extensive research has well documented this phenomenon.

The conditions affecting the planned transfers and discharges of Farren and Mount Saint Vincent residents are far from optimal. Family members and guardians will not be able to be physically present to support residents prior to, during, or after transfers. They will not be able to provide emotional support or hands-on assistance in settling residents in

their new surroundings. Moreover, current Farren residents have significant behavioral or psychiatrically related issues in addition to their medical care needs. Many, if not most, of the staff who are familiar with the care and behavioral management of these residents will not be available to care for them.

Family members of Mount Saint Vincent residents who will need to be moved to another nursing home are not able to physically visit alternative facilities to determine if they are an appropriate placement for their mother or father.

Farren Care Center is a unique provider. It is the only long-term care facility in the Commonwealth with the capacity to care for individuals with serious behavioral health and psychiatric needs. The Commonwealth depends upon the facility as a “provider of last resort” for referrals from the Department of Mental Health and Department of Corrections, as well as for individuals who have been refused admission in at least three conventional nursing homes – often times many more.

A psychiatric nursing home has special requirements for its physical plant as well as for the qualifications, training, and supervision of its staff. All of the Farren units are locked for a wide variety of reasons including wandering, leaving, and aggressive behavior, and to create safety and security. Farren has segregated units for men and women, as many have been sexually traumatized and many have sexual disinhibition.

Although many private rooms are needed, it is unclear how many will be available in the new facility.

Thanks to the Sisters of Providence and the staff's dedication through many contri-

butions, there is a large gated outdoor area at the Farren which serves as an essential therapeutic resource for a population with serious behavioral issues. This allows residents access to the outdoors for walks, gardening of flowers and vegetables, group activities such as basketball and softball, and of course individual activities. There is also a memorial garden, which the residents created with a therapist, where residents can leave mementos, signs, and memorials to those who they have lost.

Bathrooms at Farren accommodate two people at most, but at Mount Saint Vincent, many serve two rooms so that there are four to a bathroom. Although it is unusual, there is a covered area where staff bring residents to smoke. Many cannot leave the building on their own but really appreciate this way to leave the floor and meet a long-term pleasure. (Psychiatrists have shared that smoking can be helpful to those who live with ongoing psychotic symptoms.)

It is not at all clear that the Mount Saint Vincent facility will be able to accommodate these physical changes to be ready to care for this population in such a short transition time, potentially putting all the residents at further risk.

Another hallmark of Farren is that it has typically had a psychiatrist as the medical director. He or she has worked at least weekly with a broad team of clinical staff including MSWs, nursing and psychiatric NPs, activities and rehab to provide a comprehensive care plan that met the patients' very discrete care needs. The psychiatrist was the decision maker on the admission of the most challenging residents, as well as those who had been designated as sex offenders.

We ask Governor Baker for his help. We know and appreciate that he fully recognizes the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, as he has taken steps just in recent days to more aggressively address the spread of the infection. He has mandated mask-wearing in public, limited the hours and capacity of restaurants, and imposed other necessary restrictions. Many school districts have moved to all-virtual programming. Most colleges and universities house students in single-occupancy rooms.

Given these and other extraordinary – and for the situation appropriate – measures, it makes no sense to allow the transfer of more than 125 frail and vulnerable patients, and risk exposing them to infection and the trauma of transfer.

Even more than making no sense, it is antithetical to sound public health principles and the rights of these residents. The transfers are not for the well-being and in the best interests of residents. They are for the express purpose of minimizing the financial burden of the provider. This is not a valid reason to allow the plans to go ahead at this time.

The fact that the transfers involve a facility in Holyoke, where the tragedy at the Soldiers Home occurred, should be even more reason to halt the process until it is safer to do so.

For the sake of the residents, their family members, and caregivers, we implore the Commonwealth to stop this plan at this time.

Judi Fonsh, MSW, is the former director of social services and admissions at the Farren Care Center. She lives in Leverett. Paul Lanzikos, the former state Commissioner of Elder Services, lives in Beverly.

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BMX from page A1

who and how many riders there are in my race.

I am Shyanne, and I have been racing BMX bikes since I was 7 years old. In January, I will turn 17, and I *still* love riding BMX. It is a sport that is fun and allows me to meet new nice and kind people.

Pedal-bike BMX (bicycle motocross) was first popularized in the 1970s when kids started to race their bicycles on dirt tracks in southern California. Bicycles were originally made for transportation and leisure, but then became tools for exercise and extreme sport. Manufacturers began to design bikes specifically for BMX racing.

BMX bikes are not mountain bikes; people often confuse the two. A BMX bike is meant to be specific to the racer's height and weight, and only has one speed. The frame is small and simple, making for a faster sprint. The bike is not allowed to have pegs or gears to shift. Brakes are required.

The creation of BMX is attributed to Scot Breithaupt, and one of the first known female riders was Kittie Weston-Knauer. When I first started racing, I had to race in co-ed groups, and I did not care for it. Racing with boys made me feel like I wasn't really a girl, as if I was one of the boys, due to the lack of girls riding in BMX.

It was not until 2015 or 2016 that I started to notice there was a slight increase in female riders. However, in 2017 the number of female BMX riders decreased, and most of the remain-



Savanna (left) and Shyanne (right) celebrate a victory.

ing female riders are on a designated BMX team.

I suspect most female riders quit early in their BMX career because they can not race fellow females. When a new rider starts racing BMX, they are placed in the lowest level called "Novice," in which you race people in your relative age group and speed. In order to move up from Novice to "Intermediate," you have to win ten races in the Novice class. In the Intermediate class the race is faster, but competitors are the same gender and age.

The third and final level or class is "Expert," where the racers are even faster and highly skilled. Since there are fewer female BMX racers, sometimes there are not enough female riders to generate a full race a given day. In that situation, females



A BMX course, with a race in progress.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Good Samaritans; Permanent Barriers

By KATIE NOLAN

On November 1, Erving police officer James Loynd responded to a potential suicide call at the French King Bridge and "possibly saved the individual's life," according to a commendation letter written by acting police chief Robert Holst.

As recounted by Holst in the letter and at Monday's Erving selectboard meeting, when Loynd arrived, he engaged with the man "on the wrong side of the railing who appeared to be getting ready to jump."

According to Holst, after speaking with Loynd and three other people on the bridge, "the individual turned and faced the bridge, now with his back to the water. While Officer Loynd and the Good Samaritans continued to try and communicate with the individual he turned back around facing towards the water." At this point, Loynd leaned over and pulled the man back to safety, with the help of the "Good Samaritans."

The man was subsequently taken to Baystate Franklin Medical Center.

Holst wrote that Loynd was "staying calm during a very intense situation, relying on his training and experience to resolve this situation and maintaining professionalism throughout the entire call." Selectboard chair Jacob Smith thanked Loynd "from myself and the town."

Selectboard member William Bembury said to Loynd, "You continue to impress and to be an exceptional police officer." Bembury requested that the commendation letter be sent to the state Department of Transportation (MassDOT) district headquarters and state senator Jo Comerford to highlight "the need for safety barriers" on the bridge.

Jacob Smith added state representative Susannah Whips to the list of recipients.

Bembury asked Holst about the three "Good Samaritans" who assisted Loynd, and Holst said he was preparing commendation letters to them as well.

According to a database compiled by Erving planning assistant Mariah Kurtz, the Erving police department has responded to twenty-nine 911 calls from the French King Bridge since January 1, with one death and nine people taken into custody. Five of the events occurred within the last month.

In May 2019, town administrator Bryan Smith recommended that the town work with the state Route 2 safety task force to advocate for safety improvements on the bridge. In September 2020, he reported that MassDOT planned to have a "20% design" hearing to solicit public comment on installing suicide prevention barriers – at a date to be announced.

In an email sent Tuesday, Smith said that when he asked two weeks ago, MassDOT had not set a hearing date.

Committee Not Yet Feasible

The board discussed forming a permanent feasibility and building committee to oversee town building projects, rather than forming a new committee for each new building project. Bryan Smith told the board that a committee was needed by December to review proposals for the public works office and dry storage building project.

Board members reviewed examples of feasibility and building committee charters for Mashpee, Greenfield, and Chelmsford. They decided to form a committee specifically for

BMX Tracks in Our Area

Westfield, MA: Westfield Fairgrounds
Wakefield, MA: Wakefield BMX
Billerica, MA: Billerica BMX
Bennington, VT: Catamount BMX
West Greenwich, RI: Woodland BMX
Torrington, CT: Foothills BMX
Meriden, CT: Falcon BMX

are allowed to join the "equivalent" male race.

When I have been in this situation, unable to race in my appropriate class, it makes me feel like nobody is paying attention to the physical differences of males and females. It can feel like the boys are stronger and have more speed so they easily beat the competing girls. A female victory in this situation is *extra* hard work; however, if accomplished, *super* gratifying.

In the future I want to see more female riders participating in BMX racing. If there were more female riders, the sport could support a larger number of dedicated female races, allowing for more female victories. My goal is that more people would try and join in the culture of BMX racing. I want to see the numbers double, or maybe even triple. I do not want to see the competitiveness of this sport come to an end. So, come give it a try!



Advice from Savanna to new riders:

During my first year of racing in 2019 I was scared of falling and getting hurt. Now, I am ready to get dirty, and I am okay if I fall, because I know I will just get back up and keep on going.

Here is some advice for people who are thinking about trying BMX racing: Just go for it! Seriously, do not be scared, you will be fine, trust me. I have already met so many interesting people, and you will too! If you do get nervous, that's okay.

The main things to keep in mind are: people cheer, and the gate will drop and make a weird beeping sound. (That's normal.)

Don't be afraid to put yourself out there and try new things. I was once scared, but I outgrew it, and you will too.

Shyanne and Savanna Cortis are studying journalism at Turners Falls High School.



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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Gill Finally Preps for Annual Meeting

By JERRI HIGGINS

Articles for the annual town meeting warrant, a request for a liquor license rate reduction from the Turners Falls Schuetzen Verein, FEMA reimbursements approval, and a recycling grant were among the topics discussed at Monday evening’s Gill selectboard meeting.

The desire to have a brief annual town meeting, while also allowing for adequate discussion and deliberation, has Gill in a balancing act most other towns have faced earlier this year during the COVID-19 pandemic. The board is hoping for good weather for their outdoor meeting, set for Saturday, November 21, but have set Monday, November 23 for a rain (or snow?) date.

“My approach this year,” said town administrator Ray Purington, “was to consolidate articles that are familiar and happen year after year, as a way to streamline... and keep the discussion to what is reasonable and necessary,” he said, referring to warrant articles that have passed unanimously “in the last 20 years.”

Reviewing the 14-article warrant with the selectboard, Purington told the board that a call would be set up later in the week with the finance committee to discuss the “omnibus budget” and other budget items, as well as the warrant request from the assessors to increase the assessors’ assistant’s hours from the current 20 hours per week to 30.

Town residents will be asked to vote on a \$1,795,622 budget for FY’21, \$9,735 of which is slated for debt service costs for the Gill-Montague regional school district.

Article 1 includes authorizing state Chapter 90 funding for FY’21 roadwork, entering into roadwork contracts with the state Department of Transportation, authorizing selectboard-approved borrowing by the treasurer “in anticipation of reimbursement,” and electing one-year positions for at least two “lumber surveyors,” as well as two or more “field drivers, fence viewers, and measurers of wood and bark.”

Acceptance of any funds from the Quintus Allen Trust, a fund set up for education expenses in Gill, Shelburne, Colrain, and Leyden, and authorization of the selectboard to use those funds toward Gill Elementary School expenses will also be voted on in the same article. Article 2 seeks renewal of the 20-year lease between the Gill-Montague district and the town for use of the Gill Elementary School, which runs out in 2021.

Other warrant articles ask voters for approval of the maximum annual expenditures for revolving funds to run the various town departments, committees, and commissions; for the maintenance of several town departments (the “omnibus” budget); to pay salaries for town officers, and cost of living adjustments (COLA) for town employees and elected officials.

Article 9 would transfer an overall \$40,000 from released overlay toward appraisal costs associated with property owned by FirstLight Power company in Gill. \$30,000 will go toward the five-year appraisal of FirstLight’s property in Gill, as well as property owned by National Grid, New England Power Company, and Eversource, with \$5,000 going into the board of assessors’

revaluation account, and the other \$5,000 into the town audit account.

The history, according to Purington, involves the way the energy companies calculate the value of their properties in Gill and other towns, behooving those towns to have that land independently appraised every five years to recoup taxes on property that the companies may have undervalued.

Articles 10 and 11 each request \$15,000 from free cash: Article 10 is a capital improvement committee recommendation for building maintenance projects at the Slate Memorial Library, and Article 11 would go toward the town’s share of the installation of ground-source heat pumps at the town hall.

“I think you should discuss the age of the existing furnace in the explanation,” selectboard chair Randy Crochier said to Purington. “There are lots of reasons,” he said about the cost of the heat pumps, “starting with the fact that for \$30,000, we get \$75,000 worth of a heating system, that also cools the building.”

“I think when you add up the amount of grant-funded work we have had for these three buildings just on the heating and cooling systems alone,” added Purington, “it is a pretty impressive number that our \$30,000 has leveraged.”

Articles 12, 13, and 14 ask for money from “taxation or transfer” to put into the town’s “other post-employment benefits” trust fund, into stabilization, and to “reduce the tax rate and stabilize the tax levy” for FY’21.

Pandemic Discount

Jeff Suprenant, president of the Turners Falls Schuetzen Verein, requested a reduced liquor license rate for 2021, telling Purington that the club had not been able to use their 2020 liquor license, which cost \$715, since the shutdown in mid-March. The club also has a seasonal restaurant license for clambakes and other events which could not happen this year.

Purington recommended the selectboard reduce the on-site license by 50%, and include a prorated fee based on how many months the club is able to resume operations in 2021.

Purington suggested that the selectboard allow a “\$200 renewal fee,” and if restrictions get lifted “where the club can operate for up to three months, they would pay another \$150, and if they can operate for up to six months it would be \$150 on top of the first \$150,” he said. “If they can operate for more than six months, they would pay the equivalent of the full \$715 license fee.”

“It looks like the club gets a little bit better benefit if it gets really bad,” said selectboard member John Ward, “and if things are moderately bad, it ends up coming out about the same. I think it is about as equitable as I could make it.”

“Even having a license that you cannot use is worth a little bit of money just to renew it,” said Purington, who told the board that it is easier to renew a liquor license than to go through the entire process of getting a new one from the state alcoholic beverage control commission. Purington said that he thought the request was reasonable, and that Bernardston and Sunderland are two towns he knows of

that have also reduced their liquor license fees for 2021.

The request was approved, with Crochier recusing himself from discussion due to his membership at the club.

Other Business

Gill recently received \$18,531 in Federal Emergency Management Agency funding. “We had \$24,708 of eligible expenses, and we get a 75% share from FEMA,” said Purington, who also said that the balance “should be covered” through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds. “It is likely we will see the money in two to three months,” he said.

The selectboard members approved a \$4,200 recycling dividend grant from the state Department of Environmental Services, which Purington said could be put toward recycling bins for residents, recycled copy paper, covering some of the hazardous waste collection day costs, and processing fees at the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility.

A loan renewal was approved for the Mariamante parcel, a property acquired by Gill in 2004.

“This will be the last time that we have to renew a loan for the Mariamante field,” said Purington, remarking that the final loan note is for \$25,000, while \$25,600 will be paid this year. Easthampton Savings Bank won the loan bid at an interest rate of 0.55%.

The fire department appointment of Randy Wheelock was approved through June 30, 2021.

CANNABIS from page A1

late 1970s and sold the company in 2000 to ConAgra.

Another director is Montague’s Josh Goldman, who for years owned a fish farm in the industrial park, Australis Aquaculture. Australis sold the facility in 2018 to a company called Great Falls Aquaculture, and now keeps an office in Greenfield. Goldman is also a member of the Shea Theater Arts Center board in Turners Falls.

The third principal of the company is John Stobierski, a Greenfield lawyer whose office appears as the address on the Flower Power permit application.

The three men registered Flower Power Growers, Inc. with the state of Massachusetts on October 9, with the type of business indicated as “Indoor Horticulture.” On the same day, they also set up an entity named River Bluff Group, LLC, with the general character listed as “Real estate development and management, and any and all lawful activities related thereto...”

In 2013, Goldman and his partner Marina Goldman started a company called ANL, Inc., along with Stobierski and five other directors. The company, which did business as A New Leaf, submitted a bid that year to run a medical marijuana dispensary, but did not succeed.

Stobierski, a member of the zoning board of appeals in Deerfield, also applied with other partners this spring for a special permit in Hatfield to build a cannabis greenhouse facility in that town.

The Montague planning board will hold a hearing on Flower Power’s application for a special permit at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 24 over Zoom. According to the planning department notice, a community outreach meeting will be held “concurrently” with the special permit hearing, and “the public will be encouraged to ask questions and share comments.”

The special permit application proposes that up to five structures will eventually be built on the 7.89-acre site, which is currently entirely wooded. They will consist of three greenhouses and two “headhouse buildings to accommodate the loading and unloading of materials.” The final design will also include a large parking lot and an access road.

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ELECTRIC from page A1

sell their older models. The website www.myeve.com/cars-for-sale lists used EVs for sale by dealers and private owners, and allows searches by location. More used EVs will likely come into the local market when the pandemic eases.

The 13 new all-electric cars available in the US, also known as battery electric vehicles (BEVs), average about 253 miles per full battery charge. That much battery range gives you loads of power to drive locally and not have to charge up until after at least several shorter outings.

Your actual mileage depends on a number of factors: how fast and aggressively you drive (driving slower back roads and coasting to stops, for example, can extend your mileage); the outside temperature (cold weather means lower mileage, though newer batteries are better equipped to withstand the cold); the terrain (driving up a hill eats up miles, but using regenerative braking downhill adds them); whether you're blasting the heat blower or using the more efficient radiant seat heat; whether you're using energy-demanding AC or opening windows to cool down.

That said, for an example of a long trip, you could probably drive the 205 miles from Montague to Provincetown with miles to spare, especially in the warmer weather when battery range typically goes up.

If you'd prefer more flexibility for longer drives, you may want to explore plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), which offer both a plug-in battery and a gas engine that kicks in automatically when the battery charge runs out.

Piling On Discounts

The Green Energy Consumers Alliance's "Drive Green" program has an excellent, though not comprehensive, listing of new and used EVs for sale by dealers, mostly in Massachusetts. Their website lists not only estimated miles per full battery charge, base prices, federal tax credits, and state rebates, but also special monthly discounts from car dealers through the program, often amounting to thousands of dollars off. (Be sure to read the fine print about special requirements, and when offers expire.)

The state's "Massachusetts Offers Rebates for Electric Vehicles" website (more-ev.org) lists the BEVs and PHEVs that qualify for state rebates. Only cars with a purchase price under \$50,000 are eligible. Qualifying BEVs have \$2,500 rebates, while rebates for PHEVs are only \$1,500.

While all-electric cars may have a higher price at first glance, between the tax credits, rebates, and Drive Green discounts, they're less pricey in the end, even if still not

affordable to many.

For example, the all-electric 2020 Nissan Leaf Plus S, with a range of about 226 miles, has a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$37,640. Assuming you can take advantage of the \$7,500 tax credit and receive a \$2,500 rebate from the state, the price is now \$27,640, before you've explored Drive Green offers. One dealer in Milford currently offers a discount of another \$8,000 off (wow!), bringing the final price to \$19,640.

Also, keep in mind that with only a handful of moving parts, EVs cost significantly less to maintain than gas cars, with their several thousand moving parts. According to the American Automobile Association, over the course of 150,000 miles, the average EV owner saves \$2,100 on maintenance compared to an owner of a gas car.

I can attest to minimal maintenance on my plug-in hybrid, even with its gas engine, because about 90% of my driving is short distances powered by the battery. I take my car in once a year for an oil change to keep the oil fresh and to top off fluids, but regular oil changes are no longer on my to-do list.

Which Plug is Right?

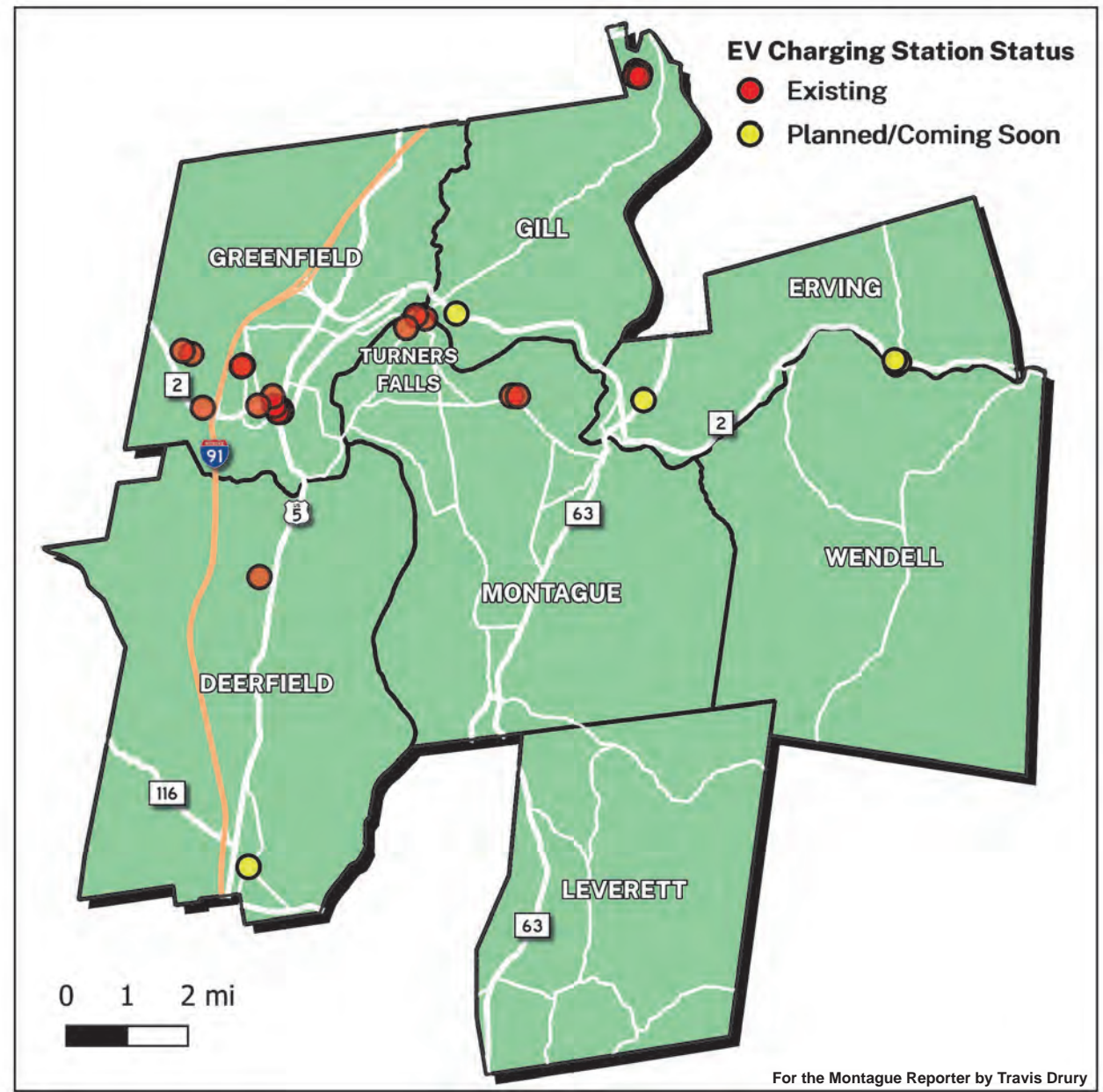
If you have an EV or are considering one for your next car, options for charging are expanding in our area and across the country. The US now has approximately 78,500 charging plugs and almost 25,000 charging stations. Most people tank up their battery by plugging in at home.

You can plug into a standard 120-volt outlet for what's referred to in EV jargon as a "trickle charge," or Level 1 charger. To fill up an empty 2021 Toyota Prius Prime plug-in hybrid (with an 8.8 kilowatt-hour battery, and an estimated 25-mile battery range before the gas engine kicks in), it takes 5.5 hours on a Level 1 outlet, and about two hours with a 240-volt Level 2 charger most common to public charging stations.

Starting with a full battery and full gas tank, the Prime can travel an estimated 640 total miles – not too shabby!

Level 2 chargers, equipped with J1772 plugs, will add about 12 to 25 miles to your battery range per hour, depending on the speed of the charger (the number of amps) and your car's capacity for charging more quickly. For example, a 32-amp Level 2 charger might charge at a rate of about 25 miles in an hour, if your car has that capacity.

Of course, all-electric cars like the Chevy Bolt, with an estimated 259-mile range, have much larger batteries. A Bolt takes about 10 hours to fully charge its empty 66-kWh bat-



tery with a Level 2 charger, which can be installed in homes.

A Bolt battery on a Level 1 outlet adds about 4 miles per hour of charging, so it would be possible to keep a Bolt well charged for local driving with a Level 1 outlet if you add charge to it nightly.

A fast-charging DC Combo (or CCS) port, which charges at a rate of about 100 miles in half an hour, is not standard on the Bolt, but might be worth the investment if you regularly take longer trips along highways and other locations with fast-charging DC stations.

Station to Station

Which leads me to the question of the availability of charging stations, and how you find them.

The map on this page shows local charging station locations, and the table lists station locations, ports, and fees. You can look up existing charging stations and find details about them at websites such as www.plugshare.com or www.chargepoint.com.

Many stations, including ChargePoint brands, are connected to the Internet, so you can see in real time whether a plug is available. ChargePoint and other stations with fees also have apps for your cell phone; the apps allow you to locate charging

stations across the country, and charge up at their proprietary stations for a fee. You can also pay at ChargePoint stations using an RFID card ordered from the company. I mention that brand because it is the most widely installed charger in our area.

Locally, the town of Montague has installed three Level 2 charging stations in Turners Falls, and one at the airport. Each of these stations has two plugs, as is typical to public chargers. With charging stations in the center of Turners Falls, renters in town are able to charge an EV even if their buildings do not have charging options.

Erving expects their single-port Level 2 charger at the new library off Route 63 to be operating by the end of this year, and possibly sooner. It's a feature of the building's LEED certification, indicating a commitment to sustainable building.

The town will be installing three new dual-port stations at the municipal lot adjacent to Riverfront Park, a short walk to their village center, to encourage EV owners to shop and eat at local restaurants while they charge their car. Assistant town planner Mariah Kurtz explained that funding from National Grid and a Green Communities grant made these stations financially possible for the town.

Gill has plans in the works to install a charger as soon as the end of this month at the Riverside municipal building (currently Four Winds School) on Route 2. Gill town administrator Ray Purington explains that the town wants to add that charger "to make more charging stations available, especially right along a major roadway."

Drivers wanting to pass the time while charging could walk to nearby restaurants on Route 2, or through the Riverside neighborhood and across the bridge to downtown Turners Falls. Northfield Mount Hermon School also has eight plugs, but its campus is currently closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Greenfield is chock full of Level 2 chargers. There are eight plugs at the Olive Street parking garage, two at the charger in the Chapman Street parking lot, several at Greenfield Community College (GCC), one at Big Y, a single-port station at Dillon Chevrolet, and several at the county jail.

For rapid DC charging, Big Y and GCC each have one CHAdeMO DC fast charger (which works on some Japanese cars, including Nissans and Mitsubishi's), and GCC also has one more common CCS DC fast charger.

Down the road from Greenfield, the Deerfield Academy Library has one Level 2 port on its charging station.

Starting this month, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) will update a 2017 report evaluating the demand for EV charging stations in Franklin County. They will help communities find funding sources, identify the number of charging stations needed, and decide where best to locate them. If feasible, FRCOG may develop cooperative purchasing of chargers to bring down the cost to towns.

With battery ranges of electric vehicles going up to allow multiple local trips and longer drives on a charge, electric vehicles will soon become even more common in our area. With the forward thinking of our towns and FRCOG, we'll also have more charging stations to keep up with the rising demand.

Town	Location	Ports	Status	Brand	Plug Type(s)	Cost	Internet?	Hours
Erving	Erving Public Library	1	By end of 2020	ChargePoint	J1772 Level 2	Fee not yet set	Y	–
	Municipal lot at Riverside Park	6	Late 2020 / early 2021	ChargePoint	–	Fee not yet set	Y	–
Gill	Riverside Municipal Building	2	Estimated Nov. 2020	ChargePoint	Level 2 (J1772)	Free, initially	Y	24/7
	Northfield Mount Hermon	8	Temporarily closed	ChargePoint, Tesla	Level 2 (J1772), DC Fast Charger, CHAdeMO	–	Y	–
Greenfield	Olive Street Parking Garage	8	Existing	ChargePoint	Level 2 (J1772)	\$1.25/hr	Y	24/7
	Franklin County Sheriff's Office	4	Existing	ChargePoint	Level 2 (J1772)	Free	Y	24/7
	Greenfield Community College	1	Existing	ChargePoint	CHAdeMO DC Fast Charger	\$0.225/kWh	Y	24/7
	Greenfield Community College	1	Existing	ChargePoint	CCS DC Fast Charger	\$0.225/kWh	Y	24/7
	Greenfield Community College	2	Existing	Unknown	Level 2 (J1772)	Unknown	N	24/7
	Greenfield City Hall	2	Existing	Unknown	Level 2 (J1772)	Free	N	24/7
	Chapman Davis Lot	2	Existing	Unknown	Level 2 (J1772)	Free	N	24/7
	Big Y	1	Existing	Unknown	Level 2 (J1772)	Payment required	N	24/7
	Big Y	1	Existing	Unknown	DC Fast CHAdeMO	Payment required	N	24/7
	Dillon Chevrolet	1	Existing	ChargePoint	Level 2 (J1772)	Unknown	Y	–
Turners Falls	Turners Falls Airport	4	Existing	ChargePoint	Level 2 (J1772)	Free	Y	24/7
	First Street	2	Existing	ChargePoint	Level 2 (J1772)	\$0.30/kWh	Y	24/7
	Second Street	2	Existing	ChargePoint	Level 2 (J1772)	\$0.30/kWh	Y	24/7
	Sixth Street	2	Existing	ChargePoint	Level 2 (J1772)	\$0.30/kWh	Y	24/7
Deerfield	Deerfield Academy Library	1	Existing	ChargePoint	Level 2 (J1772)	Free	N	24/7
	Behind Ciesluk's Market	2	Unknown	ChargePoint	Level 2 (J1772)	Fee not yet set	Y	24/7

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TURNERS FALLS

NOTICES from page A1

he’s seen at least five different managers come and go, and rent has increased from \$219 per month to \$340.

“We’re expecting another rent increase,” Walsh said. “Because it’s time. He comes over every seven years, it seems.”

Walsh also told the *Reporter* that he is no longer allowed in the management office. “The low income and the elderly, someone has to stand up for them,” he said. “Otherwise people just roll all over them.”

Court Backlog

Roughly 800 eviction cases were moving through the Western Housing Court before the shutdown last March, according to a court clerk. The first legal step is a Notice to Quit, typically a 14-day order; the second is a “summary process summons and complaint,” which asks a tenant to appear in court.

The statewide emergency eviction moratorium expired on October 17. Between October 19 and November 6, 37 Notices to Quit were issued in Franklin County, as well as 10 summary process summonses. Some are continuations of legal processes initiated before the moratorium.

Though a federal moratorium issued by the Centers for Disease Control continues until the end of the year, renters who wish to qualify must submit an affidavit proving they have exhausted other forms of assistance. The federal moratorium does not protect non-paying renters from late fees, interest, or penalties recorded by credit agencies.

Guaranteed Housing

Hope for out-of-work tenants

could come in the form of legislation making its way through the State House right now: H.5018, “An Act to guarantee housing stability during the COVID-19 emergency and recovery.” This bill, which has 87 co-sponsors and is currently sitting in the House Committee on Rules, would prevent evictions for COVID-19 related non-payment for one year, enable homeowners to defer mortgage payments, and establish a relief fund for small landlords.

“We should be preventing these cases from reaching the courts and resolve them instead with a real legislative solution,” state senator Jo Comerford wrote in a letter to constituents. “The state must do everything possible to prevent evictions and prevent homelessness. We face a housing crisis, and economic crisis, and a public health crisis all at once. Forcing people onto the street is a recipe for more suffering and impacts on families’ education, food security and health.”

According to Comerford, the state spends an average of \$42,845 to provide housing to a family that has lost it. “It is... more cost effective when the Commonwealth invests in keeping families housed,” she argued.

Knowing Failure

Salem Manufactured Homes, which purchased Leisure Woods in 1997, has a controversial history.

According to *The Gardner News*, the company paid legal reparations to a tenant in 2008 after an antidiscrimination lawsuit. The court determined that the property manager had illegally demanded expensive modifications to the person’s handicap accessible ramp.

In 2016, tenants won a years-long

lawsuit against the park owner for neglected maintenance and restricted access to public areas guaranteed by their lease. The lawsuit originally included 22 plaintiffs representing 16 households, but after nearly nine years working with *apro bono* lawyer, the eight remaining plaintiffs were awarded \$13,010 each in damages.

The judge’s ruling, which found a “breach of implied warranty of habitability,” cited the “wilful and knowing failure by the defendant owner and operator of a manufactured housing community to attend to extensive potholes and the accumulation of ice and snow on the community’s roads.”

Walsh maintains that the last rent increase of \$80, applied incrementally between 2011 and 2014, should never have happened.

“There were no people on the rent control board at the time. The town managers and town counsel filled in,” he said. “People really had to dig back in their pockets.”

The Orange mobile rent control board did not respond to a request for comment by press time.

Orange’s mobile home park rent control statute, established by a special town meeting in 1986, authorizes a three-member board “so as to remove hardships or correct inequities for both the owner and the tenant” of such parks. The board also has a role in regulating evictions, “and may issue orders which shall be defense to an action of summary process for possession.”

“Any evictions have to go through them,” Walsh explained.

Neither the business owners nor Leisure Woods’ management responded to a request for comment by press time.



LEVERETT from page A1

completed police academy training. His 14 years of police experience includes working for the Los Angeles police department.

Gould said he would take the chief’s lead in acquainting himself with local residents, and is looking forward to getting coffee at the Leverett coop, attending breakfasts and other community events, and getting to know people. He described himself as a “family man,” with a wife and three children, who comes from a small town, likes the Leverett area and its small-town feel, and wants to put down roots and be part of the community.

“It sounds corny, but being a police officer is a calling,” Gould said when asked about his motivation for a career in law enforcement. “It’s something you really have to want to do.” He said his father was also a police officer for 32 years.

A resident asked for Gould’s thoughts on the existence of unconscious racial bias and ways to combat it, to which he replied that humans are flawed, and that law enforcement is aware of such biases. Gould said it was important to stay on top of it, and that it’s something that needs to be in the forefront of officers’ minds, and called out immediately if it’s seen.

“I’m a Massachusetts man, and I’m coming home,” Gould said at the close of the interview. Selectboard chair Julie Shively asked if he would be bringing his pet goats. Gould chuckled and said yes, and asked if there was goat boarding available in Leverett.

“We have people that can board goats,” replied board member Tom Harkinson.

Chief Minckler and Julie Shive-

ly both said Angelia Rodrigues was also impressive, and would also have made a good full-time choice, though she has less experience and hasn’t yet attended the police academy. “Someone is going to snatch her up eventually,” said Minckler, “she’s that good.” Rodrigues is currently working full-time at Mount Holyoke, but wants more municipal experience.

Engines Off

Energy committee member Peggy Wolff and resident Nancy Grossman gave a presentation requesting further action to reduce the pollution from idling vehicles at the school, transfer station, post office, and other town buildings.

Wolff said she had spoken with the state Department of Environmental Protection, and received three metal signs to post encouraging people to be mindful of the issue. Leverett has had a policy limiting the idling of vehicles at these locations since 2011, but Wolff said strict enforcement of such laws was unlikely.

Grossman and Wolff said they felt the signs would help, along with possibly passing out literature, and raising a general awareness of the issue. Grossman said workers at the transfer station, and parents picking up their kids at school, have regularly reported health problems caused by exhaust fumes.

The selectboard approved placement of the signs. Highway department superintendent Matthew Boucher said the department could help with posting them.

Other Business

The board held a tax rate hearing with the board of assessors, and de-

cided to stick with a single rate class for residential, commercial, and industrial property, but did not set the rate. The board of assessors was represented by Jeff Reynolds, who said they expect to set the rate for next fiscal year by November 24.

Reynolds said total property value in the town was approximately \$286 million, leaving a maximum levy of \$7.5 million under Proposition 2 1/2. He said the levy was \$5.5 million last year.

Matthew Boucher reported the Mill Yard bridge had been officially closed by the state due to problems with the deck. He said the previous superintendent had closed the bridge two to three years ago due to ice damage to the pilings, but Boucher did not see it during his inspection.

Boucher said repairing the bridge was not a high priority, given its expense and the availability of alternate routes. He said pedestrians can still walk over it, and that the repair to the decking would not be expensive, but the engineering study would.

Two firefighters were approved as part-time snow plow drivers. A third part-timer will be available as an alternate. Shively said she likes to see firefighters doing this work.

No COVID health issues were reported during the meeting. Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis said she is in the process of submitting applications for a new round of COVID-related grant funding coming in December.

The board noted the first four-town meeting of the regional school committee and the Amherst, Leverett, Pelham, and Shutesbury selectboards will take place at 9 a.m. on Saturday, December 5.



MONTAGUE PLANNING BOARD
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING

The Montague Planning Board will hold a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 24, 2020 to consider a special permit and site plan review application submitted by **Flower Power Growers, Inc.** pursuant to Montague Zoning Bylaw Sec. 8.10 and 5.2.8(b) to permit a 110,000 square foot marijuana cultivation and manufacturing establishment. Notice is also hereby given that a Community Outreach meeting will be held concurrently with the hearing.

The proposed greenhouse facility is located at **180 Industrial Blvd, Turners Falls, MA** and the property is identified as Assessors Map 17 Lot 58. The public are encouraged to ask questions and share comments. Application, plans describing the project, and project contact information is available at www.montague-ma.gov.

Hearing will be held remotely via ZOOM due to COVID emergency orders.
ZOOM Meeting ID: 974 9207 3758
Passcode: 292645 Dial-in: (646) 558 8656

Ron Sicard, Chair.

LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on November 11, 2010: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Broadband Access
Draws A Crowd

More than 60 people turned out for a hearing in Leverett Tuesday night with Jason Whittet, deputy director of the state’s Massachusetts Broadband Initiative (MBI), the agency responsible for rolling out 1300 miles of “middle mile” open access broadband fiber to 123 underserved communities in western and central Massachusetts over the next two and a half years.

MBI is working with a mandate from the governor to find and reach residents who do not have access to the internet, and has \$26.2 million in state and \$45 million in federal stimulus funding to work with in order to provide it.

But the federal funding comes with guidelines not to hook up individual homes, but rather to reach cornerstone community institutions like schools and libraries, and to bring fiber within three miles of 99% of homes, in underserved communities like Leverett.

Whittet explained the concept of ‘middle mile’ fiber is intended not to provide the ‘last mile’ hook up for homes and businesses, but to “leverage last mile connectivity and make those economics attractive,” to other providers.

But the crowd quickly grew impatient with the power point presentation of the middle mile’s middle man. They wanted to know one thing: “Who’s gonna hook me up?”

“Leverett didn’t get electricity until the government mandated it,” said Auda Goscenski, from the back of the room. “Leverett didn’t get phone service until it was mandated by the government. I don’t see us getting last mile until it will be mandated by the government.”

Immigrants Help
Sustain Local Economy

“We have an aging population,” Center for New Americans director Jim Ayres told a crowd of

about 45 at the November 4 Senior Symposium at Greenfield Community College’s downtown center. “Younger people are leaving the area. We would be wondering how to harvest our fields and staff our hospitals,” if it were not for the influx of immigrants.

“One of my doctors is from Peru, and one is from Uruguay,” offered one of the senior citizens in attendance.

According to the 2010 preliminary census, the population of Franklin County increased .03% since 2000, and Hampshire County grew by 2.5%, Ayres said. Figures show recent immigrants make up 4% of the population in Franklin County, 7% in Hampshire County, and 12% statewide.

Ayres said the immigrants who turn up at the Center for New Americans English immersion classes in Greenfield, Northampton, and Amherst run the gamut from college grads with specialized training to people who left their home countries with less than a second grade education – people who are not literate even in their native tongues.

Eighty percent of recent immigrants in western Massachusetts are “low income people,” Ayres said, with a mixture of legal statuses, including refugees from political or religious persecution, people with documents allowing them to be in this country, and people who are here without such documents. In Greenfield, more than half of recent immigrants are from Eastern Europe, Ayres said. Many of these are evangelical Christians fleeing a kind of “passive persecution” from the dominant Russian and Romanian Orthodox churches in Moldova.

Ayres said in Moldova, evangelical Baptists are discriminated against in jobs and education. They now flock to the Moldovan Baptist Church on Federal Street in Greenfield, where more than 200 families worship.

Most other recent Franklin County immigrants are coming here from Latin America and Asia, while very few come from Africa, the Middle East or elsewhere.



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MONTAGUE from page A1
that the health board needed to discuss how to encourage compliance “with the manpower that we have.” He stressed “persuasion,” but said “that can change, if non-compliance [becomes] overly ubiquitous.”

Ellis said the emergency team had discussed the issue, and asserted that “the real pathway to compliance is by establishing social and cultural norms around these behaviors.”

Ellis showed a chart of the state’s criteria for evaluating the intensity of the pandemic in cities and towns of different populations. Montague fell at the lowest level, colored gray, with only eight “active” cases. (The number of “total cases” Wasiuk had previously cited, 38, would have put Montague in the red or danger zone, but this included all cases since the beginning of the pandemic, most of which are no longer “active.”)

“What can be shared about the nature of these eight cases?” Ariel Elan asked. “Was it one hot spot? There’s a huge difference in the amount of caution I’m going to take.”

Ellis said that “there may be a group of people that have a particular commonality,” but others were probably “isolated cases within the community – it’s not all explained by one thing.”

David Harmon said that he was “feeling frustrated with the lack of effort by our town” to communicate the governor’s order to residents. He said he saw more people on the bike path in Turners Falls and elsewhere in Montague not

wearing masks “than I have seen over the past three months.” Harmon said he believed “people were not throwing caution to the wind,” but that they “just didn’t know that things changed.”

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said he thought that compliance with safety measures and the amount of testing had improved significantly over the early months of the pandemic, but that “people are getting complacent.”

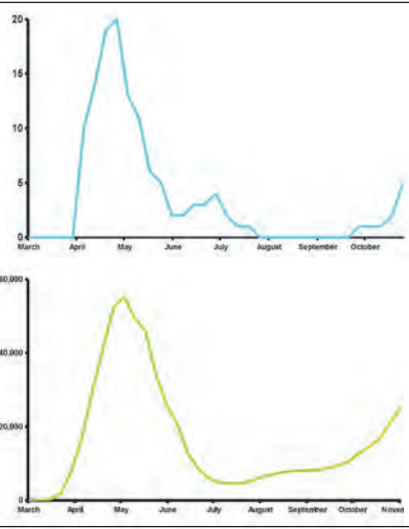
Member Mike Nelson asked about existing safety signage in the vicinity of Unity Park. Wasiuk said parks and recreation director John Dobosz had more signs he could post and distribute, but that Dobosz had expressed concern about “sign pollution.”

Kuklewicz suggested that the town consider purchasing signs from a company that produced “political signs.” “Get 50 or 100, if we need them, and then stake them out,” he said.

Capital Needs

Ellis presented the selectboard with a preliminary proposal to send to annual town meeting in the spring composed of four interrelated “capital appropriations.”

The first was a \$25,000 appropriation to beef up the “Unsafe and Unhealthy Buildings Fund,” which has been depleted by work at the former Strathmore Mill. He noted that the so-called Railroad Salvage building, which is more unsafe and unhealthy than the Strathmore, will probably be “coming into the



The monthly virus count is rising in Montague (top) and statewide (bottom).

town’s possession” within a year.

A second \$25,000 appropriation would be used for potential “engineering and survey services.” Ellis pointed to the fact that a town expenditure on a survey of the closed Fifth Street pedestrian bridge, which he called “dumb luck,” had helped produced a \$2 million grant to rebuild that structure.

A third \$25,000 allocation would enhance Montague’s contingency account, allowing the town to more effectively respond to emergencies like various recent embankment collapses along Millers Falls Road.

The fourth appropriation for \$50,000 was proposed for assessments of all town buildings and their needs in the coming years. These would include the libraries, the two elementary schools, the senior center, the public safety com-

plex, town hall, and others.

The board unanimously approved the proposal, which will be sent to the capital improvements committee for evaluation.

Capital Gains

The Department of Public Works will be hosting an open house at their new garage on Turners Falls Road next to the public safety complex this Saturday, November 14 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Ariel Elan, who served on the facilities building committee, said the event would be “safe” and follow the governor’s new protocols for indoor gatherings.

“There will be an endless parade of people in masks,” Elan predicted hopefully. “And no speakers of any kind.”

Residents can say hello, and “great car barn,” to DPW superintendent Tom Bergeron, his staff, and members of the building committee, as long as they keep their distance. The event will be catered by someone who is “up to snuff on COVID practice,” according to Elan.

Other Business

The board approved a \$24,942 change order for work on Spinner Park on Avenue A, which has been redesigned due to the discovery of a major electrical conduit that serves a nearby apartment complex. Brian McHugh of the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Carlos Nieto of Berkshire Design presented the proposal, which will fund work by Sciaba Construction Corporation.

The proposal was broken down by Nieto into appropriations for site and electrical work. McHugh said Sciaba hopes to make significant progress during the early winter, but said he thought that might be “overly optimistic.”

“They do come from southeastern Mass, and winters are maybe not as severe down there,” he said. “But their optimism was good to hear.”

The board authorized Kuklewicz and Ellis to negotiate cannabis-related “host community agreements” with two proposed businesses, one in downtown Millers Falls and the other in the airport industrial park.

The Millers Falls Company, Greenhouse Mobility Solutions, hopes to operate an online delivery business from an office devoid of pot or vehicles. The industrial park company, Flower Power Growers Inc., will be a “cultivation and manufacturing establishment,” according to a recent town posting (see article, page A1).

The board approved a cell phone stipend for new police officer Shawna Williams, and elevated Adam Kleeberg to the position of technician at the water pollution control facility.

Ellis said he had spoken to town meeting moderator Chris Collins about the possibility of a virtual winter special town meeting. “He is open to the concept, and I still need to schedule a time to meet with him,” said Ellis.

The next scheduled selectboard meeting will be on Monday, November 16.



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Above: Onions at Dancing Bear Farm in Leyden.

ArtBeat

by Trish Crapo

Opertura: Dreams for the Living

GREENFIELD – An older man with long flowing hair – is he a seer? – arrives on a rocky coast. He looks tired. His eyes well with tears. He unbuttons his robe and stands naked. What is he thinking? Why has he come here? Is he about to throw himself into the sea?



Aya Yamasaki and Jason Brown of Opertura, shown here at a JC Penney holiday photo shoot with a deity from a mixed media animation project they’re working on. The JC Penney photographer was glad to see them, Yamasaki said: “She was happy!”

Suddenly a small pink creature – a smiling protozoa? – emerges from the top of his head, seemingly unzips the man’s hair from his body, and floats away, leaving our protagonist bald as a baby.

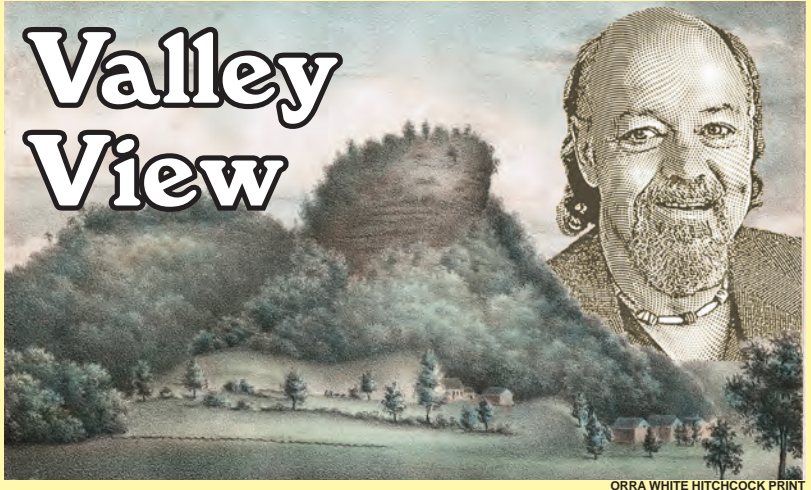
This is the opening scene in “Coast,” an animated short by Aya Yamasaki and Jason Brown, whose collaborative output goes by the name Opertura. In “Coast,” Yamasaki and Brown create a curious and joyful world in which more and more creatures spawn from the enigmatic human character’s body and begin to swim and dance through the air.

It’s a film about creative possibility, perhaps, or about the healing power of being by the sea. It doesn’t actually matter what it’s “about,” after a while. The smile on my face seems to provide meaning enough.

You’ll soon be able to view a collection of Opertura’s animations entitled “Dreams for the Living” through Amherst Cinema’s Virtual Cinema program, an online source of films that can be rented to watch at home while the theater is closed due to the pandemic. The 30-minute collection of shorts will go live on Friday, November 20. The offering is free to Amherst Cinema members; others may purchase tickets through the theater’s website. And on Tuesday, November 24 at 7 p.m., Yamasaki and Brown will hold a free Facebook Live question and answer session, also accessible through the site.

The animated characters in “Coast” frolic against a filmed backdrop of actual ocean, but other Opertura

see **OPERTURA** page B8



By **GARY SANDERSON**

GREENFIELD – There’s a glaring void in Whately’s North Street/Whately Glen neighborhood. His name is Lyndon “Sonny” Scott, a humble Whately dairy farmer and proud descendant of the town’s founding families. He died at 88 a couple of months ago, removing yet another valuable historical source who knew the land surrounding his expansive farm like no other. He’s now part of that land.

I already miss Scott’s quiet presence out in his yard, across the street at one of his barns or walking the roads on his smiling daily rounds; and I miss his soft voice, his local wisdom, and his warm blue Yankee eyes that reminded me a lot of my father’s. There is good reason for that resemblance. Both men were products of the same Whately gene pool, which has mixed and matched and blended since Rev. Thomas Hooker’s Newtown congregation of English Puritans founded Connecticut Colony in the 1630s and a faction split off in 1659 to migrate north and settle Hadley and Hatfield.

I remember Scott’s mother, bank-secretary May, sitting at the Frontier Pharmacy restaurant counter daily when I was a kid touring the streets of South Deerfield in the Sixties. I also attended the same high school as his three children, and often stopped to chat as an adult when passing through his neighborhood, especially during pheasant hunting. The Scott farm’s acreage once extended roughly from the Deerfield line passing through the Great Swamp all the way to Roaring Brook Road in Conway, with vast forest property on both sides of the South Deerfield reservoirs.

No one knew the ridges, swamps, rocks, and rills in Whately’s northwest corner better than Lyndon Scott. An expert deer hunter and woodsman who moved through the forest like a cat, he had toured his woodlands and marshes since boyhood. He knew all the stone walls, property lines, and corners of his land, not to mention the discontinued roads, cellar holes, and stone-clad wells hidden under forest canopy.

Following a sudden health event brought on by advancing age, one that doctors apparently never to-

tally understood, he had lost his eyesight overnight a few years ago. Nonetheless, his blindness never diminished his spirit or stopped him from touring the roads and trails, still with a hop in his step. He said that although doctors classified him as blind, he could detect some light, shapes, and movement, just enough to stubbornly continue putting one foot in front of the other on home turf he had trekked since childhood.

When our paths crossed, we most often chatted out along Whately Road by the old Hillside Dairy and White Birch Campgrounds or along the dirt Glen Road to Conway. With his vacant eyes seemingly looking right past me, he would first politely and sheepishly ask to whom he was speaking. That was sad. He was not. The humble man remained upbeat, seemed to accept his blindness with aplomb and without regrets or complaints. After all, he had much to be thankful for, and lots to contribute as a sage elder who dated back to the final days of horse-drawn farming. His humble manner, dignity, and humility bespoke his rural Yankee pedigree.

I vividly recall our last conversation about a year ago near the end of pheasant season. Finished hunting the wetlands bordering his meadow across the road, I spotted him in front of his garage and pulled in to chat. When our rambling conversation turned to the deer I had jumped that day – and many other times over the years – in the field hidden by a tree line forming the northern perimeter of his old pasture, now a hayfield, he warmly smiled.

Yes, he said, deer often bed in that field after feeding on acorns

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B4



Lyndon Scott

MASK SALES PROVIDE A DOUBLE BENEFIT

By **LEE WICKS**

MONTAGUE CENTER – When retired doctor and Montague resident Connie Lentz approached Kathy Lynch at the Village Store hoping to sell her handmade masks there, she got an immediate yes. They share the same goal, a desire to encourage people to wear masks to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Kathy requires anyone entering the store to wear one. Connie, who worked for years at University of Massachusetts Health Services, is a public health advocate.

At the beginning of the outbreak, Connie made her first masks for hospital staff and used old sheets in the construction. She says, “I started making the masks when they were being requested for health care providers to cover the N95 masks that were in short supply and keep them clean. I got a simple pattern from a hospital website. I hadn’t sewn for a while, and it took me a couple of days to find my machine.

“Some people, like my husband, had trouble tying the masks behind their heads, so I switched to elastic. When I worked in the hospital, I hated the masks that went behind the ears – I found them uncomfort-



Connie Lentz, left, with owner Kathy Lynch at the Montague Village Store, where masks are for sale to benefit the Food Bank of Western Mass.

able, and they tended to fall off, which is not a good thing in the middle of a sterile procedure. So I made them with the elastic going behind the head.

“I started using colorful quilting fabric, and I have gradually made a few modifications in the design, such as putting an aluminum strip that goes over the nose so it fits better. They also have an opening for a filter, such as a coffee filter. They are machine washable, but it is better to air-dry them to preserve the elastic.”

To date, Connie has produced

nearly 200 cotton masks in a variety of colors and patterns. “My goal is simple,” she says. “I just want to get more people wearing masks. If they are attractive and comfortable, there’s a better chance.”

She has made some in more subdued colors for men. “It’s silly that they are gendered that way, but the goal is for people to wear them,” she explains. “If you wear a mask, you protect others from whatever you might have. If everyone would wear a mask, we would all be better off.”

see **MASKS** page B4

Pet of the Week



“TINA”

Tina's foster describes her as overall a very shy bunny, with bouts of playfulness and running around the room. She is completely litter-box trained, and will do well free roaming, with a few exceptions of chewing some things.

Tina was transferred to Dakin from a partner rescue, and we have no information about her experience with cats and dogs. She can be a bit sassy with other rabbits and would

prefer to be the only bunny.

The adoption fee for rabbits is \$75 for one or a pair. Please review our website for cage, exercise space, and food requirements.

If you are interested in adopting one, contact the adoption staff at springfield@dakinhumane.org and include your name and phone number. For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or see www.dakin-humane.org.

CHRISTOPHER CARMODY IMAGE

Senior Center Activities

NOVEMBER 16 THROUGH 20

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center is closed and will reopen when advised by state and local authorities that it is safe to do so. This measure is taken not lightly but with the utmost concern for the most vulnerable in our community.

The Council on Aging staff will be available for referrals and information from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, at (413) 863-9357 by telephone, and coa@montague-ma.gov by email.

ERVING

Erving Senior Center director Paula Betters writes that the Center is closed until further notice:

“All programs are canceled or postponed. With that said, I will be here or at least checking my messages daily. I want anyone to call me and leave a message if they have any questions or concerns regarding food or other services. I

will call them back and if we can help with services of any kind we will do so. I am working with other agencies so we can be sure to keep our seniors healthy & safe.”

Paula can be reached at (413) 423-3649 or paula-betters@erving-ma.gov.

LEVERETT

Leverett senior activities are currently canceled. Further updates are being distributed via TTY telephone and email. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

WENDELL

Wendell senior activities have been canceled. The Wendell Senior Center is closed. The Senior Health Rides program is also suspended until advisories change. For more information, call Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

Local Supermarket Senior Accommodations

Supermarkets in Massachusetts are now required to provide special hours for seniors and immunocompromised shoppers. Call ahead – this information is accurate as of April 8; hours and accommodations are still changing.

Big Y:	Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.	(413) 772-0435
Foster's:	Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.	(413) 773-1100
Food City:	Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.	(413) 863-9591
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McCusker's Market:	Only six customers allowed in store at a time. Curbside pickup available. Order between 12 and 1 p.m. for pickup the following day. Delivery available. \$10 per delivery. Email pickup@franklincommunity.coop	(413) 625-2548
Stop and Shop:	Senior hours from 6 to 7:30 a.m.	(413) 774-6096

Wrap With Local Art This Year!

By REPORTER STAFF

TURNERS FALLS – The *Montague Reporter*, an independent non-profit newspaper, relies on local donations and other fundraising to stay in print. In the past we have hosted tag sales, concerts, quiz nights, and special dinners.

During this pandemic year when holding an event would be challenging and potentially unsafe, we have decided to bring forth a fundraising idea that we've kicked along for a couple of years behind the scenes: a special issue entirely composed of pages designed by local artists intended for use as wrapping paper.

We are grateful for the additional support offered by Montague's RiverCulture, which came through with an offer to provide stipends for the artists. Coincidentally, we switched printers this year to one that can apply color to every page, so clearly the time was right for this experiment!

We received proposals from 28 artists, and juried them down to just seven. Their designs run the gamut from simple geometric patterns to imaginary, humorous motifs to one-of-a-kind paintings of local scenes. We are very pleased with the results, and confident you will enjoy using these unique pages for wrapping gifts this year.

Our Wrapping Paper Issue will print during the week of Thanksgiving, and sell for \$5 a single set, or five for \$20. You can find it at many of the places you do your regular shopping: Food City, Red Fire North, the Montague Village Store, the Wendell Country Store, the Leverett Village Coop, Upinngil Farm Store – and possibly additional businesses in Greenfield and downtown Turners Falls. (Get in touch if you'd like to carry it!)

You will also be able to purchase this edition, as well as *Montague Reporter* t-shirts and mugs, on our website after Thanksgiving. We will ship items for a fee to folks who live afar. If you are local, please come to our 177 Avenue A office to pick up your order (or make a purchase, with exact cash or check) on the following three Saturdays between 9 a.m. and noon: November 28, December 5, and December 12.

We hope you will help support us, and use our pages to wrap presents from local businesses this year! RiverCulture is presenting an initiative to boost sales in Montague called #ItTakesFiveVillages by creating an online shopping guide at www.turnersfallsriverculture.org.



Wrapping paper, designed by local artists (from top to bottom): Hannab Brookman; Labri Bond; Steve Schmidt; and Jeanne Weintraub. All profits benefit the Reporter!

A Concert to Remember

By JERI MORAN

MONTAGUE CENTER – Violinist Anthony Berner of Williamsville, VT, and cellist Mark Fraser of



The Deerfield Duo plays on the steps of the First Congregational Church last Friday.

Montague Center, who perform professionally as the Deerfield Duo, gave a wonderful “pop-up” chamber music concert on Saturday morning on the steps of the First Congregational Church in Montague Center.

Fraser, who is the director of the Mohawk Trail Concert Series – which had to be canceled this summer because of the pandemic – suggested to Berner that they stage this performance, which Berner agreed to enthusiastically: “We haven’t been able to play together since last February and the idea of performing again was exciting.”

Berner also added that it has been hard for musicians of all stripes these past several months with no income or venues where they could play. Fraser and Berner rehearsed in Berner’s barn in Vermont, and spread word of the concert primarily by word of mouth and email as they waited for a warm day to play outside.

Many people out for a walk on Saturday morning came upon the concert and joined the socially-distanced “crowd.” The beautiful concert was greeted with such a warm response that the duo repeated the performance on Monday morning.

Not only was the Saturday concert wonderful, it also became “historic” when, between pieces, someone checking their cellphone shouted out that Biden had just been declared the election winner, and a loud and enthusiastic cheer came up from the audience. One person was heard to say “we will now always remember this concert as the moment when we heard the good news.”

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Community Legal Aid Announces Case Manager to Provide Holistic Help to Clients

SPRINGFIELD – The fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic has plunged many low-income community members into economic instability, putting them at risk of eviction and homelessness.

Community Legal Aid (CLA), a non-profit organization that provides free legal services to low-income and elderly residents of western and central Massachusetts, is pleased to announce that it has been awarded funding to hire a Case Manager to assist its housing clients in western Massachusetts. Funding for this new position has been generously provided by Health New England and the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts' COVID-19 Response Fund.

Community Legal Aid's advocates provide legal assistance to defend against evictions, but the crisis has also created or worsened financial, social, medical, and mental health issues severe enough to impact people's ability to maintain stable housing and successful tenancies.

The role of the Case Manager will be to work in collaboration with Community Legal Aid's housing at-

torneys to identify non-legal barriers and secure needed services to remove them. For example, the Case Manager will help tenants access rental assistance programs to pay off rental arrearages, thereby avoiding eviction and homelessness. The Case Manager will also help clients obtain benefits like food stamps or health benefits for medical or mental health problems.

Community Legal Aid is the civil legal aid program that provides free legal services to low-income and elderly families and individuals throughout the five counties of central and western Massachusetts (Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Berkshire and Worcester). For more information, please visit communitylegal.org.

Folks in need of help with an eviction should call (855)-252-5342, or fill out an intake form online at communitylegal.org/get-help/. Job seekers can visit communitylegal.org/get-involved/work-with-us/.



EVENT REVIEW

The Era of Silent Films at the Garden

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – The new owner of Greenfield Garden Cinema seems to like doing promotional events, and other special events, at the theater. One of the latest was on October 29, when a silent film accompanist named Jeff Rapsis played music to a couple of silent films, one being *The Phantom of the Opera* and the other being a vampire movie called *Nosferatu*.

I was able to talk to Mr. Rapsis about the event. He said, "I think it's great they are willing to take a chance on something different." In connection with him doing this event, he said, "What we're doing goes back to the roots of movies. These silent films were meant to be shown on the big screen with live music, and most importantly with the audience." I also found out an interesting tidbit about the silent film *The Phantom of the Opera*: the actor Lon Chaney created his own make-up job for his character the Phantom.

Rapsis has been doing this for 15 years, "around theaters around New England, and around the country."

I went to the 2:30 p.m. show on October 29. For starters, I was able to talk to Rapsis before the film, and he remembered me calling him to ask him a couple of questions. He also had a keyboard set up in the theater to play for the event. He took a moment to warm up the keyboard before the show. The moment had apparently spooky music in it.

Also before the film, Jeff spoke of silent films, and the music that went with them. He specifically spoke of *The Phantom of the Opera* being one such example, and the big deal that Chaney's make-up job was.

The keyboard sounded a little like it did during his warm-up moment at the beginning of the film. It felt rather cool watching that film in the theater in the dark. It looks like it was a good quality piece of film making. I wouldn't call what I saw to be horrible looking on the screen.

I would also say that Rapsis kept in good timing with the film as it ran. The music he played was spooky, but it also was suspenseful-sounding, which was good for some of the scenes in the film. It just fit for one of them.

That is one reason I will say that Jeff Rapsis is a very good accompanist for silent films. One such scene that his playing was appropriate for was one in which a threatening letter from the Phantom is involved. Another was when a chandelier falls at the Opera, and everyone is panicking. A third was when the mask-wearing Phantom leads his love interest away after the chandelier falls to his hideaway.

While there was a low turnout for this event, Rapsis did a very good job of showing how good he is at doing music to a silent film. I have no complaints, and I can't picture anybody else who was a part of the audience doing the same. The same goes for *The Phantom of the Opera*.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Burden Of Art; Mask Twerp; Soda Jerk; Porcupine; Bad Santa; Attached Owl; Downtown Threats

Monday, 11/2
1:12 p.m. Report of fence blown over from wind at Spinner Park. Spoke with DPW; they are aware and are working on rectifying the issue. There is artwork on the fence that is pulling the fence down, and they have reached out to the director of the program that placed the artwork there to ask them to take it down.

Tuesday, 11/3
6:23 a.m. Caller from Avenue A reporting really loud yelling and banging on the floor coming from a neighboring apartment. Caller states this is not the first time it has happened; has already been reported to landlords. Officer clear; parties advised of complaint; states there is a baby there and they were playing with it and making noise.

11:36 a.m. Caller from FL Roberts requesting removal of unwanted party. Caller asked customer to wear a mask according to store policy. Customer refused. Caller asked him to leave, and he refused and became belligerent. Male party left store; caller advised of trespass options.

11:43 a.m. Report of male party walking on East Chestnut Hill Road yelling, making noises, and waving his arms. Area checked at length by all units; negative contact.

Wednesday, 11/4
4:45 p.m. Caller states she received a death threat from somebody affiliated with Barstool Sports while she was at work in Northampton. Per officer, advised caller to contact Northampton PD.

6:37 p.m. Caller states that a male party threw a soda bottle at his vehicle on Third Street and then took off running. No damage to vehicle. Caller just wants it on record and will call back if there are future encounters.

Thursday, 11/5
11:20 a.m. 911 call from a third party reporting a motor vehicle accident at Montague City Road and Walnut Street; no apparent injuries, but there is an approximately seven-year-old child that got out of one of the vehicles and is walking around. No smoke/fluids, but there is airbag deployment. PD, FD, and AMR advised. Officer advises that accident resulted in property damage to an address on Montague City Road. Officer advises groceries from one of the operator's vehicles are in the patrol fridge due to the vehicle being towed. Operator's son will be coming to pick them up.

11:35 a.m. Report of ongoing speeding concerns on Millers Falls Road near Highland School Apartments. Referred to an

officer.

12:07 p.m. Report of porcupine walking in circles on Meadow Road; caller concerned that it could be sick. Animal control officer out sick today. Officer advised. Area search negative. Message left for ACO, who will respond in the morning to search for it.

5:07 p.m. 911 caller reporting that her boyfriend was just strangled by another man at Peskeomskut Park. He is OK at this time. Parties separating for the night; all parties verbally trespassed from park for the night.

7 p.m. Walk-in party from Alice Street would like it on record that someone came onto his property and kicked over and stomped on a political flag he had.

11:06 p.m. Caller from Third Street states that several people are hanging out on a porch next to her apartment and being loud. Officer spoke to involved parties; they will be taking things inside for the night.

Friday, 11/6
3:22 a.m. Caller from Third Street reports that she heard two loud bang-type noises approximately twenty minutes ago. Could not see anything; just heard the noise. Officers checked area. Building secure. Advised a truck is emptying dumpsters in the area, which could have been the source of the noise. Also, fireworks were heard earlier in the area.

11:32 a.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road states she can hear a burglar alarm going off from the gun range. Units spoke with residents at a nearby location who stated they do not have an alarm. Alarm possibly coming from gun club. Investigated.

1:14 p.m. Report of a porcupine that has been walking in a circle for 24 hours. MPD officer, ACO, and Environmental Police advised. ACO on scene.

1:48 p.m. 911 call reporting a suspicious object, described as a can with

cardboard tubes sticking out that say TNT, on the bike path under the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. Caller states item does not appear to be live; possibly a used firework. Officer located item; confirmed used firework; will dispose of same.

5:18 p.m. Caller states that she struck a deer on Walnut Street and its back legs looked injured. Deer was lying on the side of the road. No damage to vehicle. Unable to locate.

8:43 p.m. Caller states that some kids are trying to get on the roof of Hillcrest Elementary School. Two juvenile females located and moved along.

Saturday, 11/7
11:07 a.m. Caller from Fifth Street states that someone has spray-painted graffiti on her barn. Report taken.

2:38 p.m. Caller from Goddard Avenue concerned about a raccoon that appears to be ill. Message left for ACO. Animal has been dispatched.

4:35 p.m. Anonymous report of loud music coming from a Newton Street location. Officer advised. Music turned down.

8:47 p.m. Anonymous caller reported that there is a Facebook page called True Christmas that claims to donate presents to children in need. Caller provided the name of the founder of the page, a male party from Turners Falls, and stated that he is requesting copies of birth certificates and Social Security numbers for all of the children in need. Referred to an officer.

8:55 p.m. Caller states that his son was involved in a hit-and-run accident today around 1 or 1:30 p.m. Caller states the passenger in his son's car complained of neck pain at the time of the accident. Caller states there is significant damage to both vehicles but that his son did not obtain any plate information. Description of vehicle and operator provided. Officer

requesting caller to come to station with vehicle tomorrow during daylight hours to file a report and have pictures taken.

10:17 p.m. Caller states that she just hit an owl and believes it is still attached to her vehicle. MPD officer and Shelburne Control advised. No owl found; vehicle was just over line into Sunderland, and Sunderland PD was on scene.

Sunday, 11/8
2:23 p.m. Caller would like to speak to an officer about an incident that may have happened yesterday. Caller was highly intoxicated but stated she really didn't need anything.

4:31 p.m. Caller from Crescent Street states that his neighbor hit his parked car about a half hour ago; requesting incident report. Report taken.

7 p.m. Anonymous caller from Fifth Street states that a male party is causing a disturbance in his apartment. Officer states male party was unwilling to open the door. Attempted to speak with him through the door; party advised of consequences if a second complaint is made. Male called station and was advised of complaint by officer over phone. Party stated that he would have shot the officers through the door if he possessed a firearm.

9:32 p.m. 911 caller from Fourth Street states that his neighbor is pounding on his door and threatening him. While on line, female party could be heard banging on door and screaming obscenities. Both parties spoken to. Peace restored. Advised banging on each other's doors is not the best way to deal with issues.

10:28 p.m. 911 caller from Fourth Street reporting that approximately 30 minutes ago, a female threatened to clock him if he didn't close his door. Officer called female on her mother's phone and advised her not to threaten other residents.

Montague Community Television News

We'll Edit Your Videos!

By MICHAEL SMITH

Along with most businesses, MCTV encourages people to stay at home and limit visits to the station. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updated station hours.

One way to connect with your community from the confines of your quarantine is to make videos! It's easy to film a tutorial, a public service announcement, a story or a hike by using your phone, computer or one of MCTV's cameras that are sanitized and available for pickup. Any editing

can be done by MCTV staff editors, or you can try it at home!

Residents of Montague can find MCTV on Channel 17, and the MCTV Vimeo page is available online. Email hannahbrookman@gmail.com for editing assistance or filmmaking questions.

Something going on you think others would like to see? If you get in touch, we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment. Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetv@gmail.com between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. We'd love to work with you!

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1

along the north-south oak ridge behind it. At night, they'd rise to feed in the hayfield under the cover of darkness, munching the same nutritious clover and rye on which his dairy herd once feasted. Over the years, he said, many hunters had bagged nice bucks on that hardwood ridge extending back into and overlooking the foreboding Great Swamp.

Scott was curious if I had ever explored that ridge. If so, had I ever found the remains of the old building there? My answer was no. I had never followed the ridge back into the woods.

"Well," he said, "someday when we have more time, I'll show it to you. Maybe you'd have some ideas about it. I know it wasn't a house. My guess is maybe some sort of a small lumber operation."

Obviously, now that field trip will never happen. Sad but true. Nonetheless, he planted a seed for potential future inquiry, one that has already germinated. Which brings us to the present time, and a curiosity pulling back to the site. Who knows? I may soon poke around up there if I decide to hunt that back field bordering Mill River and the swamp.

What recently re-ignited my interest in the site was a project I helped friend Peter Thomas complete. I assisted him in photographing the old, handwritten Hatfield town, church, and proprietors' records dating back to 1660. From the photos, Thomas created sharpened digital files that can be enlarged and more easily read on a computer screen. My job was to limit distortion by holding the pages flat, the tip of my index finger memorializing my presence in many frames.

Of course, I couldn't resist skimming the pages for interesting tidbits and names of ancestors. Thus, before our second visit to Hatfield Town Hall, I decided it best to bring along a notebook in which I could record points of interest for future reference. I pulled a used, six- by

nine-inch steno pad from a tidy pile stacked at eye level on an upper shelf in the narrow supplies closet alongside my study's fireplace. Although I noticed that it contained five or 10 pages of notes, I was in a rush and did not investigate the topic.

Then, trying to minimize the hours in Hatfield, I never once opened the pad to enter notes. That, I decided, would have to wait until I had them available on my hard drive.

Later that night, curious about the notebook within reach of where I was seated, I opened it to see if the notes should be discarded. A quick look told me *no*, definitely not.

The pad contained notes I had taken 10 years ago during a spin through my fifth great-grandfather, Deacon Thomas Sanderson's, 18th-century tannery and shoemaking account book (1769-1797) housed at Old Deerfield's Memorial Libraries.

What a stroke of good fortune. To be perfectly honest, I had forgotten those notes existed. You know how that goes. Yet they couldn't have appeared in a timelier fashion. A treasure trove of local history focused on the old Hatfield/Whately neighborhood called Canterbury, the peripheral information among many debits and credits enhanced some of the Hatfield records most interesting to me personally.

A simple coincidence? Not in my mind. Such discoveries occur for a reason. This one motivated me back to Old Deerfield, where I re-examined my ancestor's account book. In the 2010 notes, I had fortunately recorded an alphabetical list of the family tannery/shoe-shop patrons, as well as notes of interest here and there regarding specific transactions. Among those patrons were many names with which I was more familiar today than I was 10 years ago, having studied early church and town records for South Deerfield, Sunderland and Whately.

Something I found most interesting, and prominently noted from my first notes about the Sanderson

account book, was the prevalence of barter economy between the merchant and community. With little specie available during the Revolutionary War era, debts were paid with labor – such as hoeing corn, cutting firewood, roofing and construction of buildings – and commodities, such as "cyder," maple syrup, furniture, lumber, chestnut shingles, and animal pelts.

I was not surprised to find on my recent review of the account book quite a few debts settled with loads of hemlock boards and tree bark, but I was surprised that Deacon Sanderson went so far as to note that they were coming specifically from the Great Swamp, just two miles as the crow flies from his Canterbury farm.

The inner bark of hemlocks and white oaks, including chestnut oaks, contain tannins used in the curing and preservation of leather for shoes, clothing, belts, wallets, and bridle-leather associated with saddles and equestrian straps and reins. In Old English the word *tannin* meant leather maker. So, obviously bark would have been an important commodity to a tannery, and thus would have been taken in trade by 18th- and 19th-century tanners, saddlers and cordwainers like those at the Sanderson tannery and shoe shop. The Great Swamp is still populated by hemlocks and white oaks, both of which do well in wet habitats and would have been prevalent in colonial times as well.

Imagine that. Could the ruins brought to my attention by the late Lyndon Scott have been associated with a Great Swamp lumber mill that once supplied the Sanderson tannery with bark and lumber in payment for leather goods?

As late North Hadley farmer and friend Fred Kucharski – dubbed "Freddie Bender" – used to say, "You betcha believe it."

I sure do wish Scott was still in the neighborhood. I'd love to run this fresh discovery by him.



CONNIE LENTZ PHOTO

Some of the two hundred or more masks sewn by Connie Lentz.

MASKS from page B1

Kathy and Connie decided to donate the proceeds from selling the masks at the Village Store to a non-profit of Connie's choice. That turned out to be the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, where Connie has been a consistent donor. In case you're not familiar with their good work, the Food Bank has been collecting and distributing food to communities in need since 1987. Connie says, "I am retired with a decent pension, and do not need to earn anything from the masks."

At a time when people have been out of work and benefits have stopped, food insecurity is a growing problem. The combination of a public health initiative paired with the Food Bank is a win for all. "It's just another way to build community and help people in need," says Kathy. "It's a way to demonstrate our humanity."

This week Kathy and Connie will send \$610 to the Food Bank. To put this in perspective, every dollar donated provides four meals.

That means that this donation will mean 2,400 meals for hungry people. Though it would have been fun to surprise the Food Bank, Kathy says she had to call to find the best way to make the donation. Online turns out to be best.

The masks sell for just \$5, and Connie says she will be making them as long as they are needed. As the holidays approach, a comfortable colorful mask would make an excellent stocking stuffer. By buying one, Montague Village Store customers can support an organization that is vital to our local food distribution system, and demonstrate their generosity of spirit.

To learn more about programs, outreach, and volunteer opportunities at the Food Bank, visit www.foodbankwma.org. Stop by the Montague Village Store during open hours of 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, and noon to 7 p.m. on Sundays, to purchase one of Connie's masks.



Museum Announcement: Tintypes Featuring Hair Sculptures

BRATTLEBORO, VT – A new show at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center presents *Hair Portraits* by Rachel Portesi, a Vermont-based artist who uses tintype photography to capture unusual hair sculptures she creates on her subjects, sculptures that are pinned to the background and that incorporate various objects and materials.

Portesi will give an online talk via Zoom and Facebook Live at 7 p.m. next Wednesday, November 18. A link to attend the talk will be available at brattleboromuseum.org.

Curated by BMAC chief curator Mara Williams, *Hair Portraits* reflects on the fact that since the beginning of human history, hair has held symbolic, cultural, and emotional significance. Although meanings and rites vary from culture to culture, most relate to key life events. Hair's inextricable link to identity is rooted in the fact that it is one of the only aspects of an individual's appearance over which they can have near-full control. It can be dyed, cut, braided, worn in the form of a wig or extensions, concealed, shaven off, or styled endlessly. In the context of *Hair Portraits*, this notion of control takes on an exaggerated visual form, in that models' hair is literally pinned to a wall for an effect that often appears, in the tintypes' final state, to defy physics.

Each tintype photograph in *Hair Portraits* is the culmination of hours Portesi spends making a collaborative "hair sculpture" with the model as the model stands against a wall. The subject's hair is fastened to the wall with push pins, intricately intertwined with symbolic objects such as fresh flowers, twigs, large plant fronds, family heirlooms and me-



"Flower Crown," one of the tintype photos in Rachel Portesi's Hair Portraits exhibit at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center.

mentos, and additional flora from Portesi's garden and a nearby flower farm. Several of the "hair sculptures" also use ceiling-suspended fishing line for additional volume.

Many of the objects have historical connections to fertility and femininity, like Portesi's frequent incorporation of braids and flowers. In other photographs, the integrated objects have personal resonance to Portesi or the model. In "Abuela," for instance, a confidently posed, bare-breasted woman wears an antique lace bridal collar, the hair on her head geometrically hand-sewn by Portesi into the lace. The lace collar belonged to Portesi's grandmother, but was selected by the model for its tactile resemblance to her childhood memory of her own grandmother's lace tablecloth.

The exhibition also features a film piece

comprising "hair sculpture" process footage shot on a combination of three devices: a hand-cranked 16mm film camera from 1948, a Super 8 film camera from 1978, and an iPhone 6.

Hair Portraits came about when Portesi was experiencing a complex form of grief as the result of an identity shift that occurred as her children grew older. During a 2013 artist residency at the Vermont Studio Center, Portesi began researching grief as a concept and became engrossed by historical practices of mourning – specifically, how so many encompassed hair. During her initial experimentation during the residency, Portesi set out to make self-portraits. The direction the process took turned out to make self-portraiture impossible, so she began to enlist other women with whom she had existing close relationships.

Portesi explains that her interactivity with each model during the process varies: Some prefer to check out and be on their phones while Portesi sculpts, while others are full creative collaborators. One of the models has hair that is similar to Portesi's, and the duo's process mirrors one of self-portraiture on the part of Portesi.

After the deliberate, hours-long "hair sculpture" process, the tintypes themselves are taken over a 26-second exposure.

"Because the exposure is long, and the chemistry of my homemade solvent is finicky, there is no certainty of the outcome," said Portesi. "My attraction to 'instant photography' began when I started shooting on 1970s Polaroid Land Cameras in 1995. When my beloved Polaroid 667 black and white film was discontinued in 2008, I took up the archaic medium

of tintype, which offered a similar appeal in its lack of control; each shot is one-and-done, a final product with imperfections and all. There is nothing quite like the mystery and gradual satisfaction of the final image slowly emerging before your eyes. It feels like a magic trick."

"I use hair to both honor and say goodbye to past parts of myself," Portesi said. "These images address fertility, sexuality, creativity, nurturement, and harmony and discord with nature. Above all, these images – photographs of elaborate, pinned hair sculptures constructed in the studio with the input of their subjects – are a testament to change. In my case, that change is a record of metamorphosis from a past fractured self to an integrated, confident, self-actualized woman."

In addition to Portesi's November 18 talk, BMAC will present two other events related to the exhibit. On Thursday, January 14, at 7 p.m., Helen Sheumaker, an associate teaching professor at Miami University and the author of *Love Entwined: The Curious History of Hairwork in America*, presents "Linking Us Fondly: Hairwork in 19th Century America."

And on Thursday, January 21, at 7 p.m., Portesi will present an online tintype photography demonstration from her Saxtons River, Vermont, photography studio.

BMAC is open Wednesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is on a "pay-as-you-wish" basis. Located in historic Union Station in downtown Brattleboro, at the intersection of Main Street and routes 119 and 142, the Museum is wheelchair accessible. For more information, call (802) 257-0124 or visit www.brattleboromuseum.org.

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Twenty-Eight: Byron Coley

Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – Byron Coley is a world-renowned music writer who also co-runs Feeding Tube Records and co-founded Forced Exposure (starting back when it was just small press ‘zine in the Eighties). He tends to write about the more extreme side of music and music history (punk/psych/no wave/free jazz, etc.), but also embraces some acoustic musics and poetry, and is known to write a few poems of his own. He also wrote a cookbook recently, and a biography of Chuck Norris a while back....

Check out his books and publications, and all the writing he has done for the many releases on Feeding Tube Records and many other reissue LP stickers and whatnot.

MMM: Any early music memories? Was your family into music?

BC: My family was not very musical. My parents were into the standard schmaltz of the late ‘50s/early ‘60s – Mitch Miller, Al Hirt, crappy string orchestras doing movie themes, etc. They did have a decent Reader’s Digest big band box set, but I was the only one who ever played it. When we moved to New Jersey in 1959, they decided to buy a nice baby grand piano (Mason & Hamlin), so I took piano lessons starting at age 4.

MMM: You once told me a story about interviewing Danzig... What was it again? Have you seen him lately?

BC: I have not. Ha. He used to be a pretty regular guy, living in his parents’ basement in Lodi, NJ, lifting weights and silk-screening Ed “big daddy” Roth t-shirts. I remember being down in his lair and his mom yelling down to see if we wanted sandwiches. Glenn assured her we did not.

MMM: How long have you lived in West Mass?

BC: I was in college here, off and on from ’74 to 78. Hung around some summers as well. Left in early ‘78, then moved back in ‘90. Been here ever since.

MMM: What do you like most about it?

BC: I always like the fact that there was plenty of music and weirdness around here without it being a city. When I came back in ‘90, it was after years of living in NYC, SF, LA, and Boston, and going out 4 or 5 nights every week

(when in NYC, often 4 or 5 shows a night).

To be able to be out in the country, with an airport within an hour’s drive, has a lot of appeal.

MMM: Can you talk about music out here over the years?

BC: As with anywhere, the scene around here is fluid and cyclical. When I was in college, the drinking age was 18 and Amherst was really active, but most of the local bands were pretty dull.

High point from those days was Sweet Pie gigs at Quicksilver in Amherst, or maybe Orchestra Luna at the Lazy River in Northampton. I booked shows at Hampshire, and all my best ideas would get overruled so we could have another gig by Roomful of Blues or the Pousette-Dart String Band or whatever band June Millington had at the time.

There were anomalies a bit later, like Willie Alexander & the Boom Boom Band in the Hampshire Gallery, or the Ramones at UMass, but mostly it was dull, apart from free jazz shows at UMass or weird spots in Northampton.

When i was back on the east coast in ‘80 I came up for a friend’s Div III show and the Raybeats were playing in front of the Hampshire Tavern, and 8-Eyed Spy played that night at Rahar’s, so that was cool. Same visit (I think) is when I first went and watched the Neats rehearse, so I felt like things were getting better.

MMM: How about more recently?

BC: When I moved back in ‘90 things were burbling. Northampton was now the nexus for bigger shows, and the colleges had hipper booking.

Hampshire had very cool stuff going on. Then Chris Corsano was involved with getting stuff there, and he started a thread that was followed by several generations of subsequent students. Later in the ‘90s, Michael Ehlers also moved down to Conway from Marlboro College and we started doing free jazz shows at the Amherst Unitarian as the Conway New Music Society, which led to the Fire in the Valley fests, and the co-founding of the Eremite label.

Simultaneously, Charles Reynolds and I started a folk label called Scenescrof, and tied that in with some live shows by musicians working in that tradition, which was cool. The “Stone For” series on the Amherst Commons, often tied in to shows at Mystery Train and/or the Yod space in Florence, were also key pieces of excitement.

All of which bled into house shows and things like Shannon Ketch’s Wickermania fest, John Shaw’s Gladtree Fest and Ecstatic Yod’s Festival Ecstatique. Plus the whole Flywheel shebang. Bill Nace’s series of shows at the Elevens in Northampton, etc. The late ‘90s/early ‘00s were a very busy and fun time around here.

MMM: What are the biggest differences between the Yod and FT? Similarities?

BC: The Yod thing was specifically me, Thurston [Moore] and Corsano. Chris was later supplanted by Andrew Kesin, then John Moloney. It was sort of a label, sort of a performance space, sort of a store, and had three locations – the first at the Bookmill in Montague, then two separate ones in Florence.

Feeding Tube was a label first. The Yod store had shut down and Thurston was jonesing for a new store front for us to inhabit. We looked at the space next to Northampton coffee, and the guy told us someone else had looked at it for a record store as well. That was Ted Lee.

So I got in touch with Ted, and told him Thurston and I basically had a store’s worth of used records if he was interested in a collaboration. He found a spot on King Street, and we agreed to go in on it. He had this friend, Nick, who wanted to work there although he didn’t really know much about it. So we showed him how to grade records, buy used stock and whatnot, and just dumped records in there every week.

After a while, touring schedules and various other things meant I had to start putting in hours there, and that’s what happened. At the same time there were lots of shows in the back room of the King Street store, and some bands rehearsed there as well. This was in 2010, which was also the boom era of house shows.

MMM: Is Thurston still involved in Feeding Tube? Does the Valley seem different without him and SY around?

BC: Thurston was part of the original store set-up, and then he and I started getting involved with the label stuff when Ted agreed to do our negative glam series of archival things. Once he moved to the UK, he was obviously a lot less involved, although we still co-hatch Negative Glam releases, and he drops off vinyl when he’s in the States.

And yeah, although I’m in touch with both him and Kim [Gordon] almost every week, we hung out almost every day when they lived here, and they came to stay with us regularly before that, so it’s different on a personal level.

On a cultural level, it has an impact as well, but that is just part of the evolution of the Valley. It has always had a transient quality due to the heavy collegiate (and post-collegiate) presence.

MMM: Do you think there will be long-term effects of COVID on underground music, recordings, and shows?

BC: Remains to be seen. I think it will knock a lot of small clubs and stores out of biz, but we’ll have to see what springs up in their place. Most of the people I know who really contribute to the ongoing vitality of underground culture are “lifers.” They’re not going anywhere else.

MMM: What was the first ESP LP you bought?

BC: Fugs self-titled second LP.

MMM: Any new/good stories/jokes?

BC: Mark Twain was doing a reading up in northern Maine, and the audience was almost silent while he did what he thought were some of his best lines.

Afterwards he overheard a couple

in conversation. The woman said, “I think that man was the funniest person I have ever heard in my life.”

“I know,” the man said. “It was all I could do to keep from laughing.”

MMM: What do you think of the classics, btw?

BC: I don’t read much fiction these days, but it’s always interesting to see how many new colloquial phrases and themes come from those sources, or Shakespeare, Aesop, Romans, Greeks and the Bible. The forms are all the same, just the content varies.

MMM: Have you ever thought of writing a novel?

BC: Yeah, have started a couple. The first, *Booze Fighter*, 23, was back in the ‘80s. *Dominoes* I started at Kim Gordon’s urging sometime, and did a bunch of readings from in the early Oughts. I still go back to it once in a while.

Some day... “a novel.”

MMM: You went to Hampshire, right? Has it changed much since then? Do you think the new administration is doing OK?

BC: Yeah, the new Hampshire prez seems to be actually trying to figure it out, as opposed to his predecessor....

MMM: Did you ever meet Robbie Basho, Marion Brown (he played on the street in Northampton), or Arthur Russell?

BC: Basho, no. Marion, yeah, he played regularly when he lived in Northampton, and was very approachable and nice. I have a bunch of his paintings.

Arthur Russell I saw play in NYC, but never met. I was not very outgoing in those days.

MMM: What is your favorite band from Boston? NY?

BC: Boston, the Girls. NY: Mars.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Bike Light Giveaway This Thursday!

TURNERS FALLS – This Thursday, November 12 from 3 to 6 p.m., MassBike and Sadie’s Bikes will be giving away free bike lights, including a white front light and a red back light. Sadie’s is located at 42 Canal Road in Turners Falls, across the canal from where GPS takes you. *Masks and social distancing are required.*

As we approach the darker months of the year and the fall time change, rider safety can become more challenging, so we want to light up the night and make sure riders are easily seen on the roadways. But too often - especially during this time of year - we find people caught on their bikes with inadequate lighting. Along with being compliant with the state

law requiring a white front light at night, MassBike believes simply being seen is one of the most important ways to make a bike rider safer.

Sadie’s Bikes is a full-service shop that offers used bikes, accessories, classes, and other creative curiosities, and aims to create a comfortable and inclusive space for folks in our community to learn more about the complex machines known as bikes.

The Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition (MassBike) promotes a bicycle-friendly environment and encourages bicycling for fun, fitness and transportation. To make a donation or volunteer for the Lights Brigade Campaign, visit www.massbike.org/lightsbrigade.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Seeking Area Businesses For Holiday Campaign

RiverCulture, the creative economy program of the town of Montague, is seeking businesses to participate in the holiday campaign “It Takes Five Villages.” The goal of the campaign is to boost holiday sales in Montague and to help businesses through the winter season.

The RiverCulture website will be used as a central location to link shoppers directly with local artists, crafters, authors, musicians, publishers, shops, restaurants, houseware, health and beauty services. “It Takes Five Villages”

will be widely advertised through traditional and social media.

People living or working in **Montague, Erving, Gill, Leverett, and Wendell** are eligible to participate. RiverCulture encourages all businesses to offer gift certificates. Participation is free. Email the following to riverculture@montague-ma.gov:


Your name; business name; business address; phone and business contact info; links to your website and/or social media; a list of products and/or services that

you sell; whether you offer gift certificates; and one clear, square jpeg image to be used on the campaign website.

Deadline is **5 p.m. Monday, November 23**. The campaign goes live through social media on Tuesday, November 24.

For questions about “It Takes Five Villages” contact Suzanne LoManto at (413) 863-3200 x. 115, Mondays through Thursdays. RiverCulture is a 14-year-old program working to support the creative economy in Montague.

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winning grin.
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BUT REALLY, IT WAS ACTUALLY REPORTED A DEAD MAN'S VOTE WAS COUNTED.

TRUCKS WERE DRIVING UP WITH UNMARKED BOXES OF BALLOTS TO FILL IN BY DEMOCRATS.

U.F.O.'S WERE SEEN OVER PHILADELPHIA BEAMING UP BALLOT BOXES... AND MAYBE

LIE

LIE

LIE!

LIE!

BYE

by denis f. bordeaux

Cool Cats on the Ave

What's with all the Vote signs?

The humans express choices by voting.

I wish we had a vote.

Meow! Cats for changing the dinner hour!

Cats, Choose open bag policy!

We need to work on our message.

Suzette

SURFING ON STRESS!

CLIMATE CHANGE

PANDEMIC

POLITICAL CRISIS

CRASH!

OMG!

NO JOB

NO CHILDCARE

HELP!

25,000

LILLY MOSS COMIC

OVER THE HILL

It is parochial to think that our Big Bang was the only one. Earlier Universes existed before ours.

You're thinking outloud again, Harry.

Earlier black holes leak radiation. If the Universe operates in a perpetual cycle...

That's much better, Sport.

Carolyn Clark

THREE DEGREES °F WARMING

JANICE ROWAN

Today we can study science again

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OPERTURA from page B1

shorts make use of soft watercolor backgrounds, paper cutouts, or fully drawn environments, such as the Japanese snack shop where a boy and girl put their heads together, thereby opening a portal to another world, which they go explore rather than sitting around waiting for their takoyaki. Anything can happen – and does – in the worlds Yamasaki and Brown conjure.

The Greenfield couple has been drawing illustrations together for “17, 18 – or more – years,” Yamasaki says.

She adds that “our taste is pretty different if you see our illustrations separately,” but their collaborative process intentionally blurs any distinctions between them.

“There are probably things we could pick out,” Brown says. “Aya has a much better eye for color than I do.” Though it’s clearly not of interest to either of them to claim specific aspects of their animation’s visual look.

“We approach the work through conversation, drawing each other’s ideas,” Brown says. “Seeing what evolves as we go back and forth in conversation. We’re interested in going beyond what each of us could do on our own.”

The work might be based on personal experience, dreams, or perhaps a concept or idea they want to illustrate or explore. They did an animation for the children’s show *Yo, Gabba Gabba!* that details the sounds different animals make, for instance, and they’ve done animated music videos for the bands Bunnies and Rayons. Sometimes the work just begins with a particular color, or a patterned paper they want to play with.

Brown describes the animated shorts as “straightforward, nutritious or beneficial, nuggets of narrative.” Though “straightforward” in an Opertura animation might include a character like Jane Bone, a leg bone, escaping from her human’s body, growing eyes, and heading off on her own adventures.

Brown says the pair likes to create work that “people can look at and take in at a glance, and yet that has some layers going on as well. You don’t have to dig in, but if you sit with it and you do dig in, you start to see there’s more going on.”

He adds that he and Yamasaki also like to “subvert a particular direction that things might seem to be going in.”

For instance, when drawing their comic,

Weird Healing, which ran in this paper from 2013 to 2016, one of them would start a narrative, then leave it to the other to finish.

“They were a little absurd and surreal,” Brown admits.

In *Weird Healing*, a long-nosed guy named Pim travels the universes with Gigi, a round-headed, horned character, seeking “to help people who have some sort of ailment, and conventional methods are not working,” Brown says. “Or maybe the problem is not what the person thought was the problem.”

Pim heals primarily with empathy, relying on love and intuition. Knowledgeable in medicinal plants and herbal remedies, Gigi is more apt to pull a mortar and pestle and some unusual-looking leaves from his robes and grind up a treatment. The Opertura website describes the comic as focusing on “embracing the unknown with openness and a willingness to understand.”

Drawing the weekly comic was a positive experience for Yamasaki and Brown. Its limited format made for a nice break from creating the many frames required in an animated short.

“It’s always nice to have a routine,” Brown says. “The comic was short-term, regular, and we could generate an idea and not hang onto it for too long.”

Yamasaki adds, “It was a weird healing for us.”

“It kept us sane,” Brown agrees.

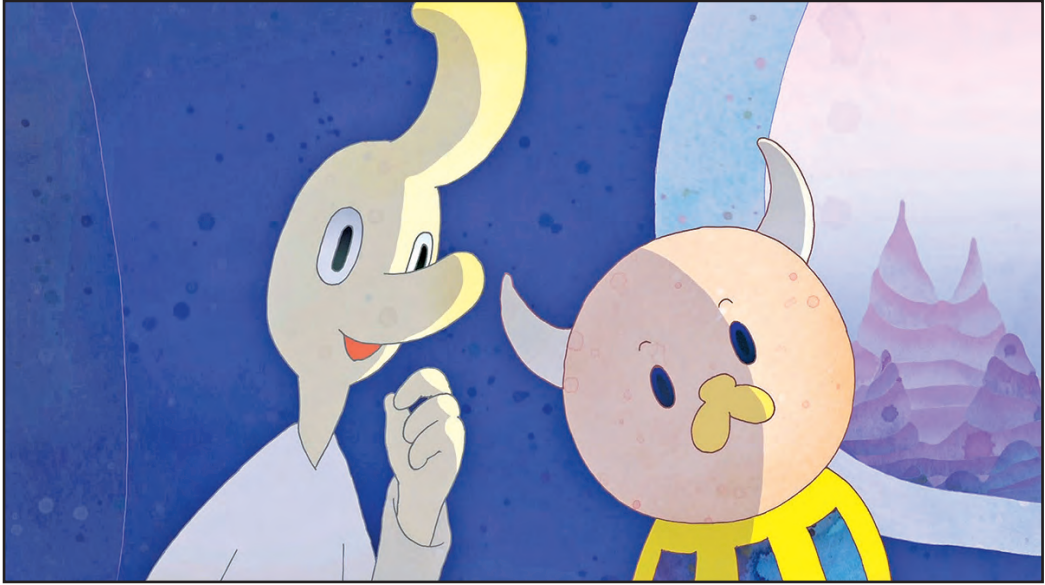
This coming February, Yamasaki and Brown will embark on a two-week residency they were awarded at MASS MoCA. They’ll have an apartment and a studio, and the freedom to explore whatever creative directions and ideas come to them. They say they hope to explore more mixed media animation, mixing live characters in costume – like the deity shown with them in the JC Penney photo shoot – with drawn animation.

“We don’t have to deliver anything, we get to just go there and work,” Brown says. “This is a good opportunity to experiment with things we’ve been wanting to do.”

Learn more about Opertura, including their weekly Saturday Meetings on Twitch, at opertura.org. For more information about “Dreams for the Living” or to purchase tickets, go to amherstcinema.org or call (413) 253-2547.



OPERTURA IMAGES



Top: Opertura’s collection of animated shorts will go live Friday, November 20, through the Amherst Cinema website. A question-and-answer session with Yamasaki and Brown follows on Tuesday, November 24. Middle: An animated short featuring Pim and Gigi, the intrepid healers from the comic “Weird Healing,” will be part of the “Dreams for the Living” collection of shorts offered by Amherst Cinema, starting November 20. Bottom: A still from “Fearless Woman,” an animated short that will also be part of the collection.

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